三国志 ㊷

曹操の死

横山光輝

希望コミックス125

SANGOKUSHI

42

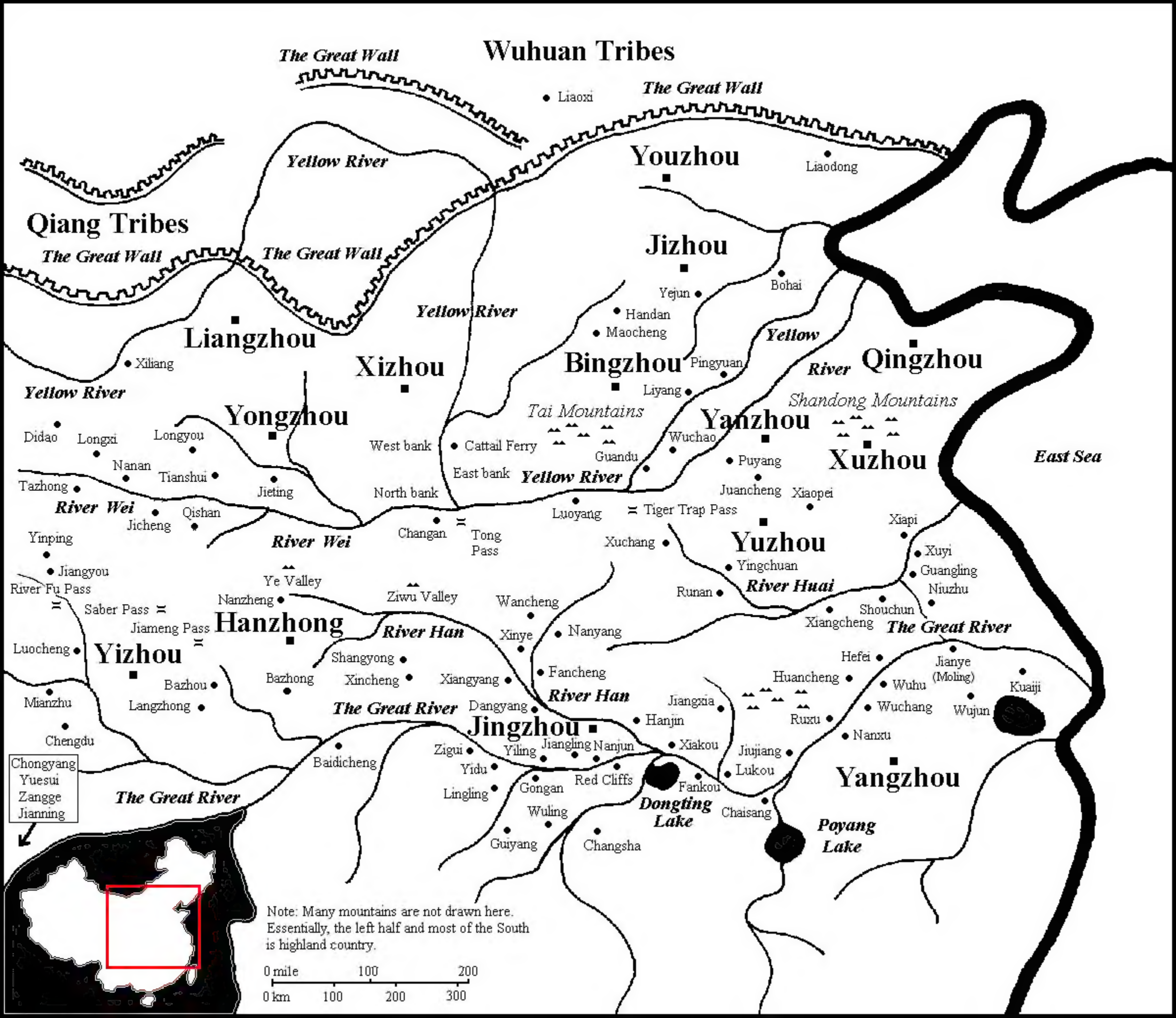
CAO CAO'S DEATH



CAO CAO
MENGDE

GUAN YU
YUNCHANG

YOKOYAMA
MITSUTERU


Wuhuan Tribes
The Great Wall
The Great Wall
Liaoxi
Youzhou
Liaodong
Yellow River
Qiang Tribes
The Great Wall
The Great Wall
Jizhou
Bohai
Yejun
Handan
Maocheng
Yellow River
Liangzhou
Xizhou
Bingzhou
Pingyuan
Yellow River
Qingzhou
Xiliang
Yellow River
Liyang
Shandong Mountains
Tai Mountains
Yongzhou
Yanzhou
Didao
Longxi
Longyou
West bank
Cattail Ferry
Wuchao
Guandu
Xuzhou
East Sea
Nanan
East bank
Yellow River
Puyang
Tianshui
Tazhong
Jieting
North bank
Juancheng
Xiaopei
River Wei
Qishan
Luoyang
Tiger Trap Pass
Jicheng
Changan
Tong Pass
Xuchang
Yuzhou
Xiapi
Yinping
River Wei
Xuyi
Jiangyou
Ye Valley
Yingchuan
Guangling
River Fu Pass
Ziwu Valley
Runan
River Huai
Niuzhu
Saber Pass
Nanzheng
Wancheng
Shouchun
Jiameng Pass
Hanzhong
River Han
Xinye
Nanyang
Xiangcheng
The Great River
Luocheng
Yizhou
Shangyong
Hefei
Jianye (Moling)
Fancheng
Huancheng
Bazhou
Bazhong
Xincheng
Xiangyang
Wuhu
Kuaiji
River Han
Jiangxia
Mianzhu
Langzhong
The Great River
Dangyang
Wuchang
Wujun
Ruxu
Hanjin
Jingzhou
Nanxu
Chengdu
Zigui
Yiling
Jiangling
Nanjun
Xiakou
Jiujiang
Baidicheng
Yidu
Lukou
Yangzhou
Chongyang
Yuesui
Zangge
Jianning
Red Cliffs
Fankou
Lingling
Gongan
Dongting Lake
Chaisang
The Great River
Wuling
Poyang Lake
Guiyang
Changsha
Note: Many mountains are not drawn here.
Essentially, the left half and most of the South
is highland country.
0 mile 100 200
0 km 100 200 300

MAJOR CHARACTERS OF SANGOKUSHI



CAI MAO:
FORMER GENERAL OF LIU BIAO, WHO BECAME THE SUPREME ADMIRAL OF WEI'S NAVY WHEN JINGZHOU SURRENDERED TO CAO CAO. IN VOLUME 25, HE IS FRAMED BY ZHOU YU'S PLOT AND THUS EXECUTED BY CAO CAO.



CAO CAO MENGDE:
THE AMBITIOUS AND MACHIAVELLIAN HERO OF SANGOKUSHI. HAVING BECOME THE CHANCELLOR OF HAN, HE HAS RELEGATED EMPEROR XIAN AS A MERE PUPPET RULER.



CAO REN:
YOUNGER COUSIN OF CAO CAO AND NOW HIS LOYAL GENERAL.



CAO REN:
COUSIN OF CAO CAO AND NOW HIS LOYAL GENERAL. PORTRAYED AS BRAVE BUT HOT-TEMPERED IN THE STORY.



CHENG GONG:
A CITY GUARD CAPTAIN WHO ARRESTED CAO CAO, ONLY TO FREE AND ESCAPE WITH HIM AFTER SYMPATHIZING WITH HIS STORY. HOWEVER, HE LATER DEFECTS TO LU BU AND SERVES AS HIS ADVISOR. IN VOLUME 14, HE IS EXECUTED ALONG WITH LU BU.



CHENG YU:
IMPORTANT AND LOYAL STRATEGIST SERVING CAO CAO.



CHEN DENG:
THE SON OF CHEN GUI AND FORMERLY TAO QIAN OF XUZHOU'S SUBORDINATE. HE AND HIS FATHER SUCCESSFULLY PLOTTED LU BU'S DOWNFALL.



CHEN GUI:
FATHER OF CHEN DENG WHO SUCCESSFULLY PLOTTED LU BU'S DOWNFALL. DESPITE SECRETLY WORKING TOGETHER WITH LIU BEI AGAINST CAO CAO, CAO CAO SPARES HIS LIFE AND ALLOWS HIM TO CONTINUE LIVING IN XUZHOU.



DIAN WEI:
CAO CAO'S PERSONAL BODYGUARD, RENOWNED FOR HIS STRENGTH. HE IS ALSO KNOWN BY THE NICKNAME, "E LAI," IN REFERENCE TO THE GENERAL OF THE SAME NAME WHO SERVED UNDER KING ZHOU OF SHANG. IN VOLUME 12, HE WAS KILLED DURING ZHANG XIU'S PLOT TO KILL CAO CAO.



DIAO CHAN:
A SLAVE GIRL OF WANG YUN, WHO RAISED HER AS HIS OWN DAUGHTER. SHE AND WANG YUN PLOTTED TO DISTANCE LU BU FROM DONG ZHUO BY HAVING HER SEDUCE BOTH MEN. IN VOLUME 8, SHE COMMITTED SUICIDE AFTER ACCOMPLISHING HER GOAL.



DONG CHENG:
ELDER STATESMAN OF HAN WHO IS EMPEROR XIAN'S CONFIDANT. EMPEROR XIAN SECRETELY ASKS HIM TO ELIMINATE CAO CAO, WHO NOW RULES THE IMPERIAL COURT AS CHANCELLOR. IN VOLUME 17, HE IS EXECUTED AFTER HIS ASSASSINATION PLOT IS FOUND OUT BY CAO CAO.



DONG ZHUO:
GOVERNOR OF LIANGZHOU WHO LATER SEIZED CONTROL OF LUOYANG AND SEATED HIMSELF AS THE CHANCELLOR OF HAN, BECOMING AN INFAMOUS TYRANT. IN VOLUME 8, HE IS BETRAYED AND KILLED BY HIS RIGHT-HAND MAN, LU BU.



EMPRESS HE:
ORIGINALY A PEASANT, HER BEAUTY WAS NOTICED BY THE TEN ATTENDANTS AND SHE ROSE TO BECOME THE EMPRESS, UTILIZING RUTHLESS MEANS. HOWEVER, SHE AND HER SON WERE REMOVED FROM POWER AND KILLED BY DONG ZHUO WHEN HE CAME TO POWER.



FA ZHENG:
FORMER SUBJECT OF LIU ZHANG, BUT DEFECTED TO LIU BEI DURING HIS CONQUEST OF SHU. HE IS ONE OF LIU BEI'S KEY STRATEGISTS.



GAN NING:
FORMER-PIRATE WHO IS NOW A FIRECE GENERAL OF WU.



GONGSUN ZAN:
GOVERNOR OF BEIPING, WHO WAGES WAR AGAINST YUAN SHAO FOR KILLING HIS YOUNG BROTHER. IN VOLUME 15, YUAN SHAO'S ARMY CONQUERS BEIPING, CAUSING GONGSUN ZAN TO COMMIT SUICIDE.



GUAN PING:
GUAN YU'S ADOPTED SON AS OF VOLUME 19.



GUAN YU YUNCHANG:
SWORN YOUNGER BROTHER TO LIU BEI AND SWORN OLDER BROTHER TO ZHANG FEI. HE IS AS FIERCE AS GUAN YU BUT IS MORE RESTRAINED AND CALM IN HIS MANNERISMS.



GUO JIA:
THE TALENTED STRATEGIST AND ADVISOR TO CAO CAO. HE DIES FROM ILLNESS DURING CAO CAO'S CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE YUAN FAMILY (UNSHOWN IN MANGA).



HE JIN:
ORIGINALLY A SIMPLE BUTCHER, HE BECAME A GENERAL WHEN HIS YOUNGER SISTER ROSE TO BECOME EMPRESS HE. HE IS KILLED BY THE TEN ATTENDANTS DURING THEIR POWER STRUGGLE IN VOLUME 3.



HUANG ZHONG:
AN ELDERLY WARRIOR GENERAL RENOWNED ESPECIALLY FOR HIS SKILL WITH THE BOW. FORMERLY SERVED LIU BIAO AND HAN XUAN BUT SINCE THE END OF V28, HE NOW SERVES LIU BEI.



HUANG GAI:
LOYAL GENERAL OF WU, WHOSE FAMILY HAS SERVED THE SUN FAMILY FOR THREE GENERATIONS.



JIANG QIN:
GENERAL OF WU. FORMERLY A BANDIT ALONG WITH ZHOU TAI, BUT BECAME SUN CE'S SUBORDINATE OUT OF ADMIRATION FOR SUN CE'S FATHER, SUN JIAN.



LI DIAN:
SCHOLARLY GENERAL UNDER THE SERVICE OF CAO CAO.



LING TONG:
FORMIDABLE GENERAL OF WU. HE BEARS A GRUDGE AGAINST GAN NING FOR KILLING HIS FATHER BACK WHEN GAN NING WAS NOT A WU OFFICER (UNSHOWN IN MANGA).



JIA XU:
FORMER STRATEGIST OF ZHANG XIU, WHO PLOTTED A FAILED ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT ON CAO CAO, WHICH LEFT DIAN WEI DEAD. AS OF VOLUME 16, HE HAS DEFECTED TO CAO CAO AND SERVES AS HIS ADVISOR.



LI RU:
CUNNING ADVISOR TO DONG ZHUO. WITH HIS ADVICE, DONG ZHUO FIRMLY SECURES HIS SEAT AS THE CHANCELLOR OF HAN. IN VOLUME 8, HE IS KILLED ALONG WITH DONG ZHUO WHEN LU BU BETRAYS THEM.



LIU BIAO:
THE GOVERNOR OF JINGZHOU. HE PASSES AWAY DUE TO SICKNESS IN VOLUME 22 AND THE CONSEQUENT SUCCESSION CRISIS ALLOWS CAO CAO TO TAKE OVER JINGZHOU.



LIU BEI XUANDE:
THE CENTRAL CHARACTER OF SANGOKUSHI. A KIND AND VIRTUOUS MAN, WHO CLAIMS DESCENT FROM EMPEROR JING OF HAN. HE HAS SWORN AN OATH OF BROTHERHOOD WITH GUAN YU AND ZHANG FEI.



LIU FENG:
LIU BEI'S ADOPTED SON. ORIGINALLY THE NEPHEW OF LIU MI, HE WAS ADOPTED UPON FIRST SIGHT BY LIU BEI WHO TOOK A LIKING TO HIM IN VOLUME 21.



LIU QI:
ELDEST SON OF LIU BIAO WHO TEMPORARILY LOSES HIS INHERITANCE OF JINGZHOU DUE TO CAI MAO'S PLOT. IN VOLUME 29, HE PASSES AWAY FROM ILLNESS AND THE RIGHTFUL OWNERSHIP OF JINGZHOU CONTINUES TO BE DEBATED BETWEEN SUN QUAN AND LIU BEI.



LIU ZHANG:
INCOMPETENT RULER OF SHU (ALTERNATIVE NAME FOR YIZHOU). HE SEEKS LIU BEI'S HELP TO FEND OFF ZHANG LU, BUT RELATIONS SOON SOUR AND LIU BEI USURPS HIS RULE OVER SHU. AS OF VOLUME 35, HE IS EXILED TO JINGZHOU.



LU BU:
ALTHOUGH REPUTED TO BE THE STRONGEST WARRIOR, HE IS HOT-HEADED AND RARELY HEEDS WISE ADVICE. IN VOLUME 14, HE WAS BETRAYED BY HIS SUBORDINATES, AND EXECUTED BY CAO CAO.



LU MENG:
FIERCE GENERAL OF WU, WHO HAS TAKEN OVER LU SU'S FORCES SINCE HIS PASSING.



LU SU:
IMPORTANT MILITARY GENERAL AND ADVISOR OF WU.



MA CHAO:
A FIERCE WARRIOR WHO SEEKS TO AVENGE HIS FATHER MA TENG'S DEATH AT CAO CAO'S HANDS. IN VOLUME 35, HE ENTERS LIU BEI'S SERVICE AND BECOMES ONE OF HIS MOST VALUABLE GENERALS.



MA DAI:
A NEPHEW OF MA CHAO WHO ENTERS LIU BEI'S SERVICE ALONGSIDE HIS UNCLE.



MA LIANG:
ONE OF LIU BEI'S ADVISORS. HE IS THE FOURTH YOUNGEST OF THE FIVE MA BROTHERS, AND IS NOTED FOR HIS INTELLECT AND WHITE EYEBROWS.



MA TENG:
GOVERNOR OF XILIANG AND FATHER OF MA CHAO, WHO SIGNED THE BLOOD-PLEDGE TO ELIMINATE CAO CAO. IN VOLUME 30, HE IS EXECUTED FOR A FAILED ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT OF CAO CAO.



MENG DA:
FORMER SUBJECT OF LIU ZHANG WHO DEFECTS TO LIU BEI, ALONG WITH HIS GOOD FRIENDS ZHANG SONG AND FA ZHENG.



MI ZHU:
ONE OF LIU BEI'S ADVISORS.



PANG DE:
FIERCE GENERAL WHO FORMERLY SERVED MA TENG AND THEN MA CHAO. IN VOLUME 36, HE DEFECTS TO CAO CAO'S SERVICE DUE TO A TROUBLED RELATIONSHIP WITH ZHANG LU, THE LORD OF HANZHONG.



PANG TONG SHIYUAN:
NICKNAMED THE YOUNG PHOENIX (FENGCHU), HE IS A MASTERFUL STRATEGIST SAID TO BE ZHUGE LIANG'S EQUAL. AFTER ENTERING LIU BEI'S SERVICE, HE TRAGICALLY MET AN EARLY DEATH IN SHU WHEN AMBUSHED BY ZHANG REN IN VOLUME 34.



SHUI JING:
HIS REAL NAME IS SIMA HUI BUT HE IS MORE COMMONLY KNOWN BY HIS TAOIST NAME, SHUI JING (MEANING WATER MIRROR). HE IS THE TEACHER OF ZHUGE LIANG, PANG TONG, AND XU SHU.



SUN CE:
ELDEST SON OF SUN JIAN, WHO TURNS THE SUN FAMILY'S FORTUNE AROUND WITH HIS CONQUEST OF THE SOUTH-LANDS. IN VOLUME 19, A FAILED ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT AND CONFLICT WITH YU JI CAUSES HIS BODY AND MENTAL HEALTH TO WEAKEN. HE SUCCUMBS TO DEATH SHORTLY AFTER.



SUN JIAN:
THE GOVERNOR OF CHANGSHA WHO PARTICIPATED IN THE ALLIANCE TO BRING DOWN DONG ZHUO. HOWEVER, HIS ALLIES LIU BIAO AND YUAN SHAO TO TURN ON HIM WHEN HE TRIES TO KEEP THE IMPERIAL SEAL FOR HIMSELF.
IN VOLUME 7, HE IS KILLED IN BATTLE AGAINST YUAN SHAO.



SUN QIAN:
TRUSTED ADVISOR TO LIU BEI. (HIS ROLE IS MUCH SMALLER IN SANGOKUSHI COMPARED TO THE ORIGINAL NOVEL.)



SUN QUAN:
YOUNGER BROTHER OF SUN CE AND THE CURRENT RULER OF WU, THE SOUTHLANDS OF CHINA.



TAISHI CI:
GENERAL WHO FORMERLY SERVED LIU YAO BUT DEFECTED TO SUN CE IN VOLUME 11. DURING THE BATTLE OF HEFEI (VOL. 29), HE FALLS PREY TO ZHANG LIAO'S PLAN AND IS KILLED IN BATTLE.



TAO QIAN:
THE KIND GOVERNOR OF XUZHOU WHO ACCIDENTALLY INVOKES CAO CAO'S WRATH WHEN HIS DISLOYAL SUBORDINATE ZHANG KAI KILLS CAO CAO'S FATHER, CAO SONG. UPON HIS DEATH, HE BEQUEATHS XUZHOU TO LIU BEI.



THE TEN ATTENDANTS:
A CORRUPT GROUP OF 10 EUNUCHS WHO WERE THE HIGHEST RANKING MINISTERS OF THE IMPERIAL COURT. THEY WERE KILLED DURING THE POWER STRUGGLE WITH HE JIN IN VOLUME 4.



WANG YUN:
THE MINISTER OF THE MASSES, ONE OF THE 3 HIGHEST RANKING POSTS IN THE IMPERIAL COURT. HE SUCCESSFULLY PLOTS DONG ZHUO'S DOWNFALL USING DIAO CHAN IN VOLUME 8. HOWEVER, HE IS LATER KILLED BY REMNANTS OF DONG ZHUO'S ARMY (UNSHOWN IN MANGA).



WEI YAN:
GENERAL WHO FORMERLY SERVED LIU BIAO AND HAN XUAN BUT HAS DEFECTED TO LIU BEI ALONG WITH HUANG ZHONG IN VOLUME 28.



WEN CHOU:
HE AND YANG LIANG ARE YUAN SHAO'S TWO STRONGEST GENERALS. IN VOLUME 18, HE IS AMBUSHED BY CAO CAO'S ARMY AND KILLED BY GUAN YU.



XIAHOU DUN:
TRUSTED GENERAL OF CAO CAO. HE LOST HIS LEFT EYE DURING A BATTLE AGAINST LU BU'S ARMY IN VOLUME 13.



XU CHU:
TRUSTED BODYGUARD OF CAO CAO. ORIGINALY A PEASANT, HE WAS RECRUITED BY CAO CAO WHO WAS IMPRESSED AFTER SEEING XU CHU'S DUEL WITH DIAN WEI.



XU SHU (SHAN FU):
THE TALENTED STRATEGIST WHO STUDIED UNDER SHUI JING. AFTER A BRIEF STINT OF SERVICE TO LIU BEI, HE IS TRICKED INTO COMING TO XUCHANG AND SERVING CAO CAO (VOLUME 21).



XUN YU:
TALENTED ADVISOR TO CA CAO.



XU HUANG:
CALM AND COLLECTED GENERAL UNDER SERVICE TO CAO CAO. CONSIDERED TO BE ONE OF THE FIVE TOP GENERALS OF WEI BY CHEN SHOU, AUTHOR OF RECORDS OF THE THREE KINGDOMS.



YAN LIANG:
HE AND WEN CHOU ARE YUAN SHAO'S TWO STRONGEST GENERALS. IN VOLUME 17, HE WAS KILLED BY GUAN YU WHILE FIGHTING CAO CAO'S ARMY AT BAIMA.



YAN YAN:
FORMER GENERAL OF LIU ZHANG BUT DEFECTED TO LIU BEI AFTER HIS CAPTURE AT ZHANG FEI'S HANDS IN VOLUME 34. HE IS NOTED FOR HIS ENERGY DESPITE HIS OLD AGE.



YU JIN:
GENERAL SERVING CAO CAO. CONSIDERED TO BE ONE OF THE FIVE TOP GENERALS OF WEI BY CHEN SHOU, AUTHOR OF RECORDS OF THE THREE KINGDOMS.



YUAN SHAO:
OLDER BROTHER OF YUAN SHU AND THE GOVERNOR OF JIZHOU. AFTER MANY YEARS OF WARRING AGAINST CAO CAO FOR CONTROL OF NORTHERN CHINA, HE AND HIS FAMILY ARE DEFEATED.



YUAN SHU:
YOUNGER BROTHER OF YUAN SHAO AND THE GOVERNOR OF NANYANG. AFTER RECEIVING THE IMPERIAL SEAL FROM SUN CE, HE DECLARES HIMSELF AS THE EMPEROR OF ZHONG DYNASTY. IN VOLUME 15, HE DIES OF THIRST AFTER BEING ON THE RUN FROM LIU BEI AND CAO CAO'S ARMIES.



ZHANG FEI YIDE:
A FIRECE, SHORT-TEMPERED WARRIOR WHO IS THE SWORN YOUNGER BROTHER OF LIU BEI AND GUAN YU.



ZHANG LIAO:
ONE OF CAO CAO'S TOP GENERALS. HE WAS FORMERLY LU BU'S SUBORDINATE BUT DEFECTED TO CAO CAO AFTER THE FORMER'S EXECUTION.



ZHANG LU:
THE LEADER OF THE CELESTIAL MASTERS TAOIST MOVEMENT, AND THE RULER OF HANZHONG. IN VOLUME 36, CAO CAO CONQUERS HANZHONG BUT SPARES ZHANG LU.



ZHANG REN:
ONE OF SHU'S MOST CAPABLE GENERALS WHO PLANNED THE AMBUSH THAT KILLED PANG TONG. HE REFUSED TO SERVE LIU BEI UNLIKE MANY OF HIS COMRADES AND WAS THUS EXECUTED WHEN FINALLY CAPTURED AT THE HANDS OF ZHUGE LIANG (VOLUME 35).



ZHANG SONG:
AN ADVISOR TO LIU ZHANG WHO, UPON FAILING TO MAKE AN ALLIANCE BETWEEN CAO CAO AND LIU ZHANG, SOUGHT LIU BEI'S SUPPORT AND SWITCHED HIS ALLEGIANCE. IN VOLUME 34, HE IS EXECUTED WHEN HIS BROTHER REPORTS HIS BETRAYAL TO LIU ZHANG.



ZHANG XIU:
LORD OF WANCHENG WHO ATTEMPTED TO KILL CAO CAO DURING THE BATTLE OF WANCHENG IN VOLUME 12. AFTER YEARS OF CONFLICT AGAINST CAO CAO, HE FINALLY DECIDES TO DEFECT TO CAO CAO IN VOLUME 16.

ZHAO YUN ZILONG:
A FORMER SUBJECT OF YUAN SHAO BUT LATER DEFECTED TO SERVE GONGSUN ZAN. AFTER GONGSUN ZAN'S DEATH, HE BECOMES ONE OF LIU BEI'S MOST TRUSTED GENERALS.

ZHOU TAI:
GENERAL OF WU. FORMERLY A BANDIT ALONG WITH JIANG QIN BUT BECAME SUN CE'S SUBORDINATE OUT OF ADMIRATION FOR HIS FATHER, SUN JIAN.

ZHANG ZHAO:
ELDER STATESMAN AND SUN QUAN'S TRUSTED ADVISOR. HE ORIGINALLY ENTERED SUN CE'S SERVICE ALONG WITH ZHANG HONG, WITH WHOM HE WAS REFERRED TO AS THE "TWO ZHANGS."

ZHOU CANG:
FORMERLY A YELLOW TURBAN, HE MEETS GUAN YU IN VOLUME 18 AND BECOMES HIS SUBORDINATE.

ZHOU YU GONGJIN:
SWORN BROTHER OF SUN CE, AND ONE OF WU'S TOP MINDS, SERVING AS THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF DURING THE BATTLE OF THE RED CLIFFS. HE RECEIVES A CRITICAL ARROW-WOUND DURING HIS NANJUN CAMPAIGN (VOL. 27) WHICH HE NEVER FULLY RECOVERS FROM, LEADING TO HIS TRAGIC EARLY DEATH IN VOLUME 30.

ZHUGE LIANG KONGMING:
MASTERFUL STRATEGIST AND FORMER STUDENT OF SHUI JING. IN VOLUME 21, HE YIELDS TO LIU BEI'S PERSISTENCE AND DECIDES TO BECOME HIS SUBJECT.

ROMANCE OF THE THREE KINGDOMS (SANGOKUSHI)

三国志

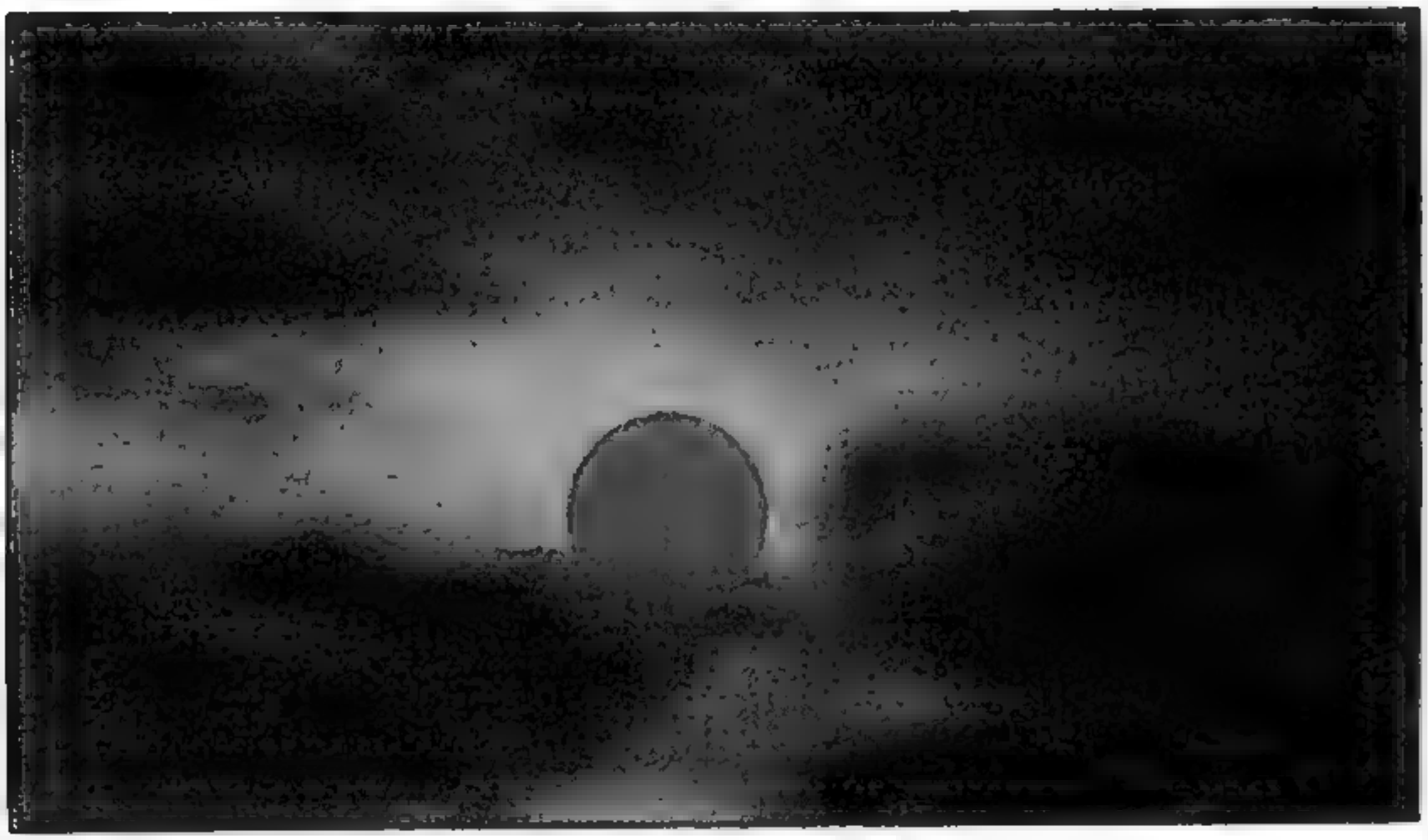
VOLUME 42
CAO CAO'S DEATH

TABLE OF CONTENTS

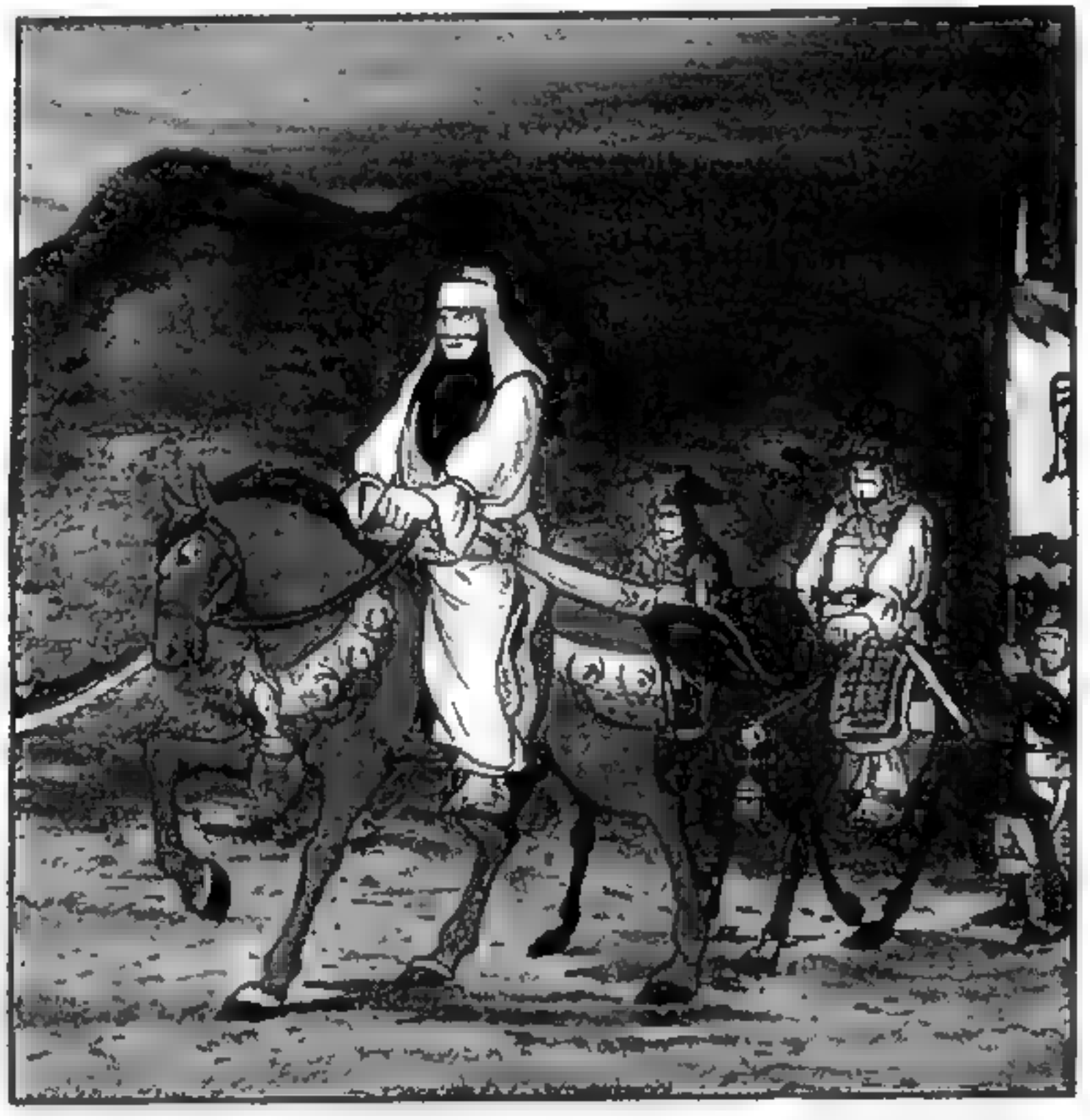
SEEDS OF REBELLION 7
FRATERNAL CONFLICT 32
NEW KING OF WEI 59
THE GREAT PHYSICIAN HUA TUO 71
CAO CAO'S ILLNESS 85
MUCH ADO ABOUT A HEAD 108
GUAN YU'S END 126
RETREAT TO MAICHENG 145
POEM IN SEVEN PACES 155
CAO CAO'S DEATH 168
SHU'S ANGUISH 183
NO REINFORCEMENTS 199

（月刊『モーニング・ツー』掲載）

RETREAT TO MAICHENG







DO YOU TAKE ME FOR A MEEK COWARD WHO'D GIVE UP WITHOUT A FIGHT!?

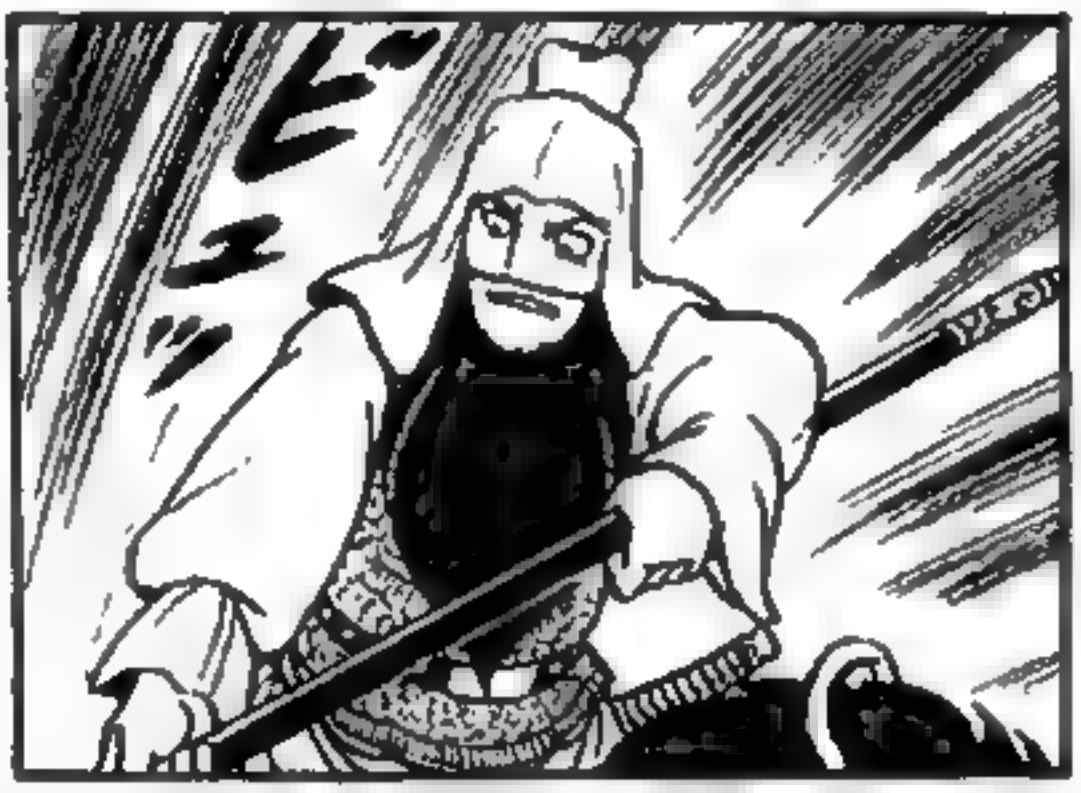
SILENCE! HOW DARE YOU STEAL JINGZHOU DURING MY ABSENCE!

GUAN YU, YOU SHOULD REALIZE BY NOW THAT YOU HAVE NO PLACE TO GO. LAY DOWN YOUR ARMS AND SURRENDER.

ATTACK!














RETREAT!


BUT JIANG QIN DID NOT MUSTER A PROPER FIGHT.




THE ENEMIES ARE IN RETREAT! PURSUE THEM!

WHA!?

*FLAGS READ CITIZENS OF JINGZHOU

YOUR FAMILY IS LIVING HAPPILY IN JINGZHOU!

BROTHER, ARE YOU ALIVE!?

IS MY SON THERE!?

T-THAT'S MY POPS UP THERE...

COME BACK HOME TO US! ARE WE NOT ALL MEN OF JINGZHOU!?

DID YOU FORGET JINGZHOU IS YOUR HOME!? WHO DO YOU PLAN TO KILL BY INVADING IT? YOUR FRIENDS? YOUR FAMILY?

I SEE MY YOUNGER BROTHER ...

MNN...


BEEP BEEP
.....


ATTACK!


ATTACK, I SAY!


WE REFUSE!


I'M GOING BACK TO MY MA IN JINGZHOU!

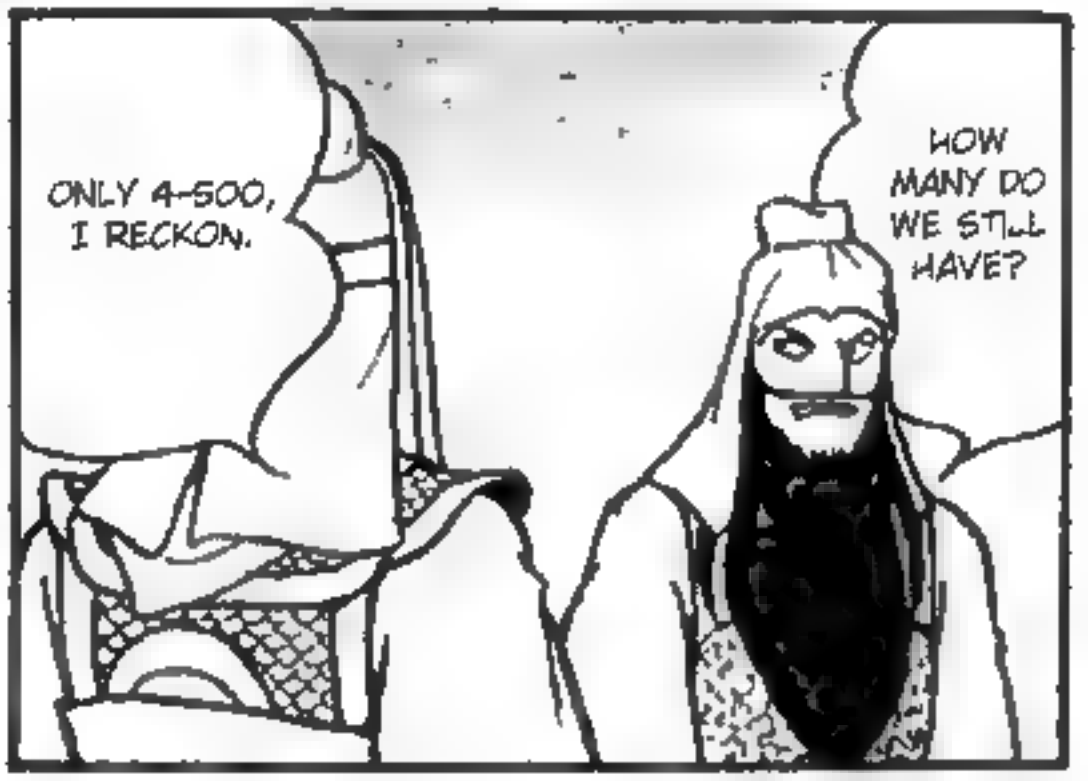

I'M NOT FIGHTING MY OWN FATHER AND BROTHERS!


FATHER!




LET THEM GO. THERE'S NO GENERAL SKILLED ENOUGH IN THIS WORLD WHO CAN CALL BACK MEN WHO'VE ABANDONED ALL THOUGHTS OF FIGHTING AND TURN THEM INTO EFFECTIVE SOLDIERS.


WE HAVE TO OPEN UP AN ESCAPE ROUTE SOMEHOW...
WE'LL BE ANNHILATED IF THEY ATTACK US NOW FROM BOTH FLANKS.


ONLY 4-500, I RECKON.
HOW MANY DO WE STILL HAVE?


VERY WELL.
THERE'S THE OLD ABANDONED FORT OF MAICHENG NEARBY. LET US TAKE REFUGE THERE FOR NOW, FATHER.
荊州領民州
荊州領民州
吳

NOT FAR FROM HERE IS SHANGYONG, WHERE LIU FENG AND MENG DA ARE STATIONED, SIR.

OUR REMAINING SOLDIERS ARE STEADFAST AND STRONG, BUT WITH OUR FEW NUMBERS, WE CANNOT STAVE OFF THE ENEMIES FOR LONG.

HMM... I SEE NO OTHER OPTION THAN THAT.

IF WE CAN JUST GET REINFORCEMENTS FROM THEM, NOT ONLY CAN WE PUSH BACK THE ENEMIES, BUT A RECONQUEST OF JINGZHOU IS STI... POSSIBLE

AHHH!

LET'S TAKE A BETTER LOOK AT OUR IMMEDIATE SURROUND-INGS.

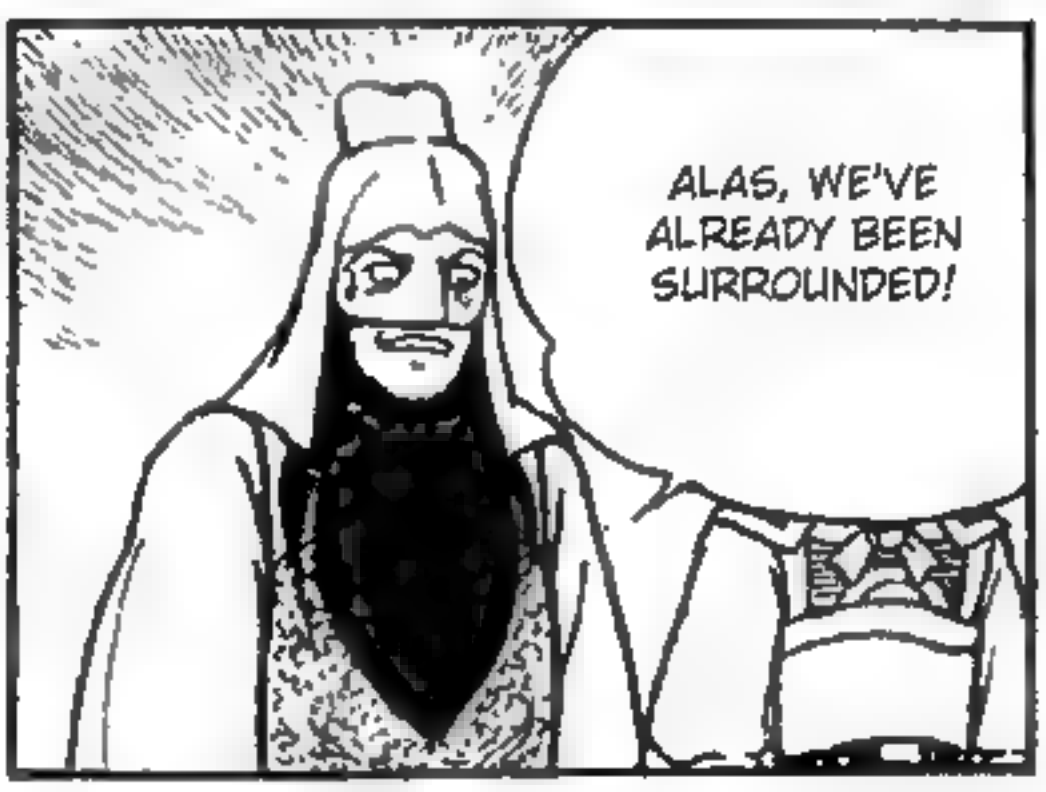
關

*FLAGS READ WU (吳)

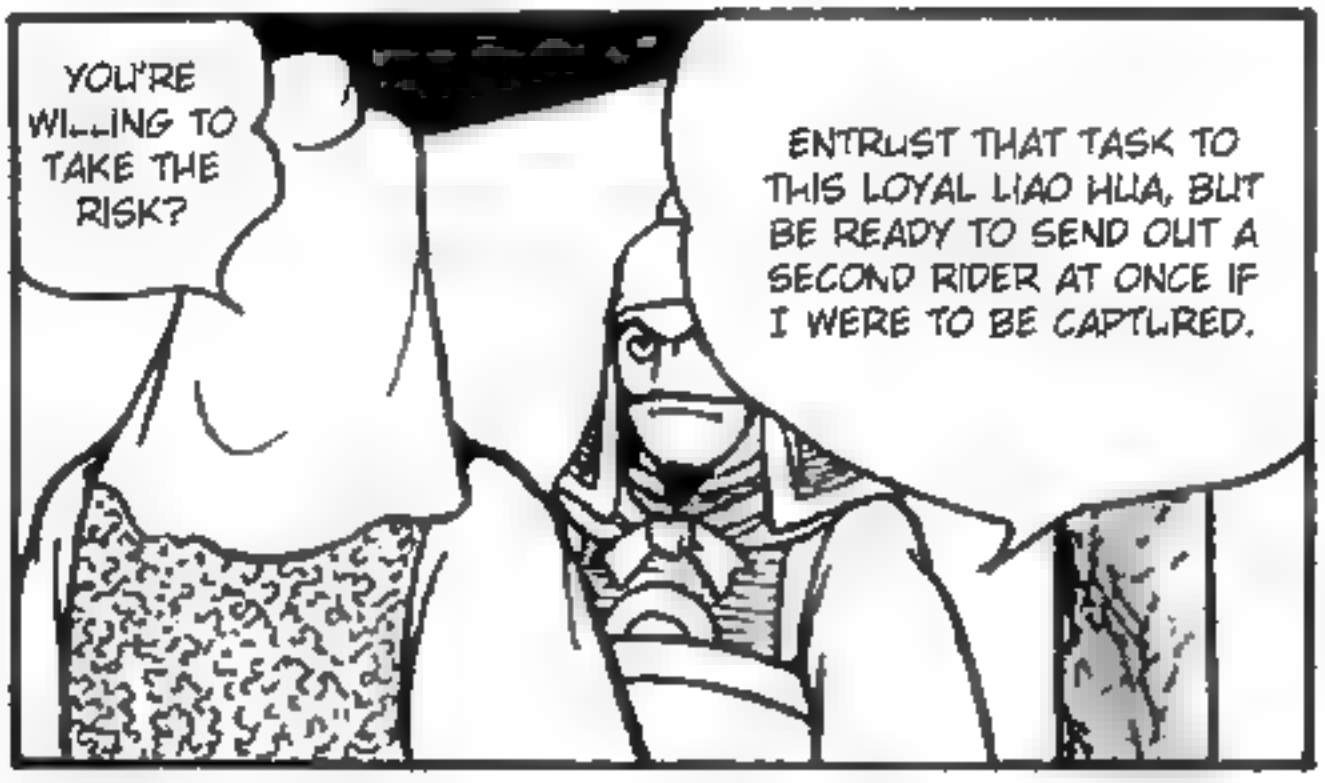
吳 吳 吳 吳

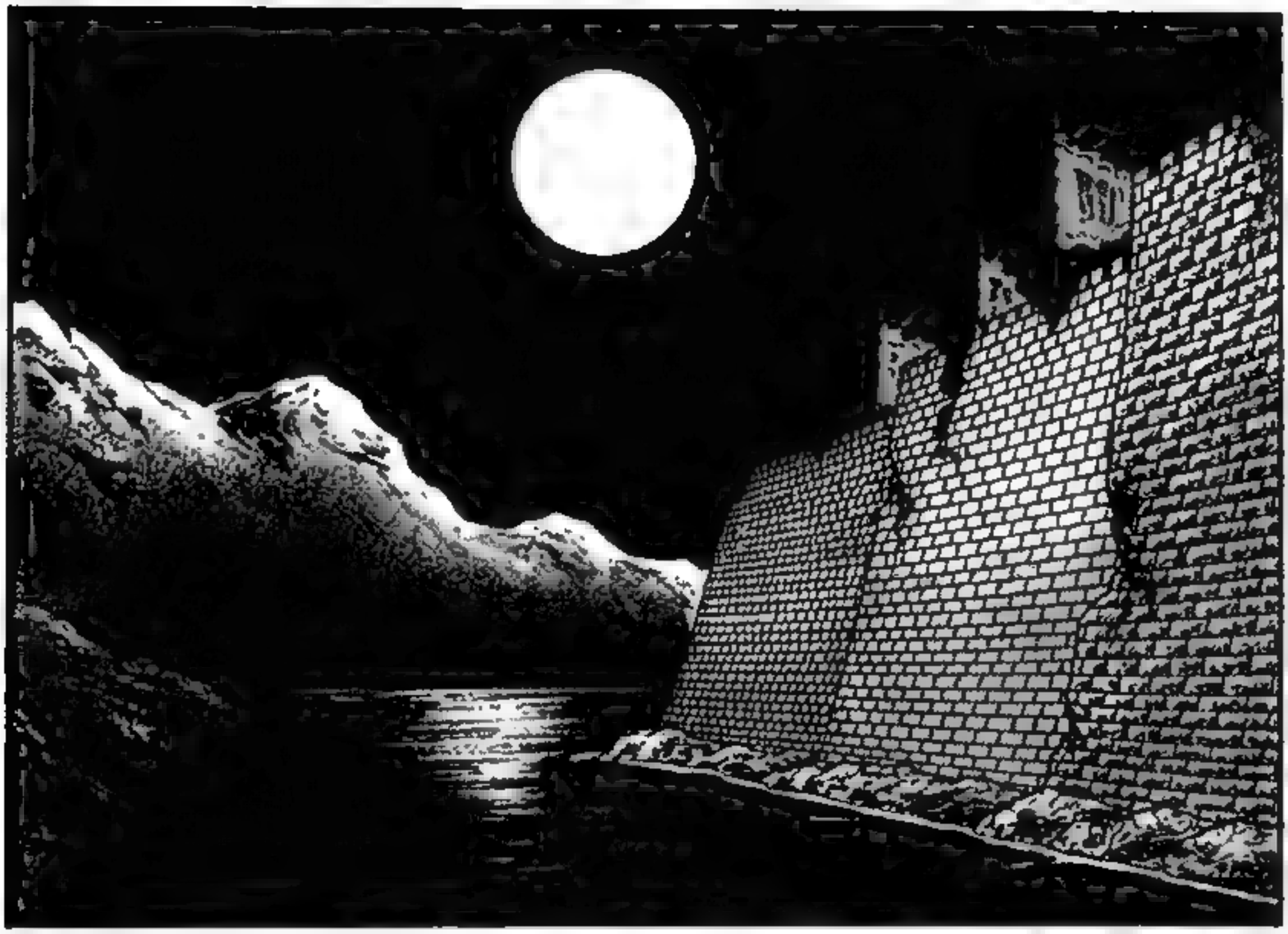

吳
吳
吳
吳

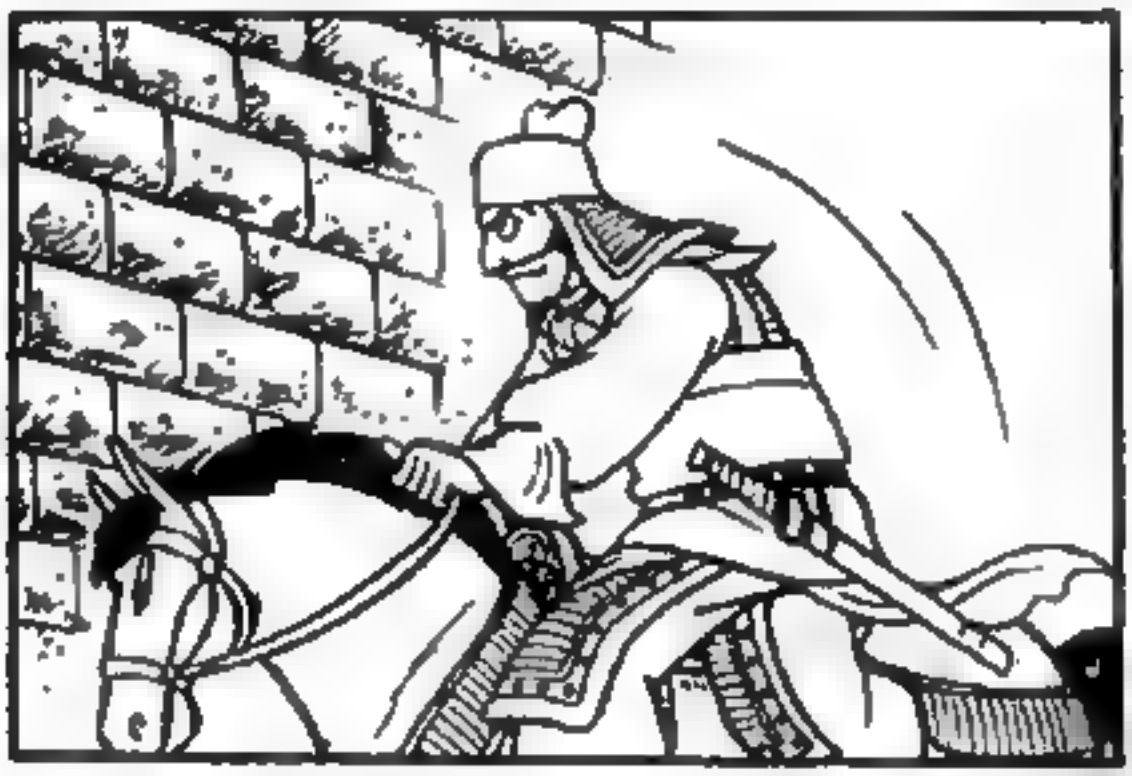

EVEN SENDING OUT A MESSAGE TO SHANGYONG WILL BE DIFFICULT NOW.


ALAS, WE'VE ALREADY BEEN SURROUNDED!


YES, SIR.
VERY WELL, TRY TO BREAK THE ENCIRCLEMENT AT NIGHT.

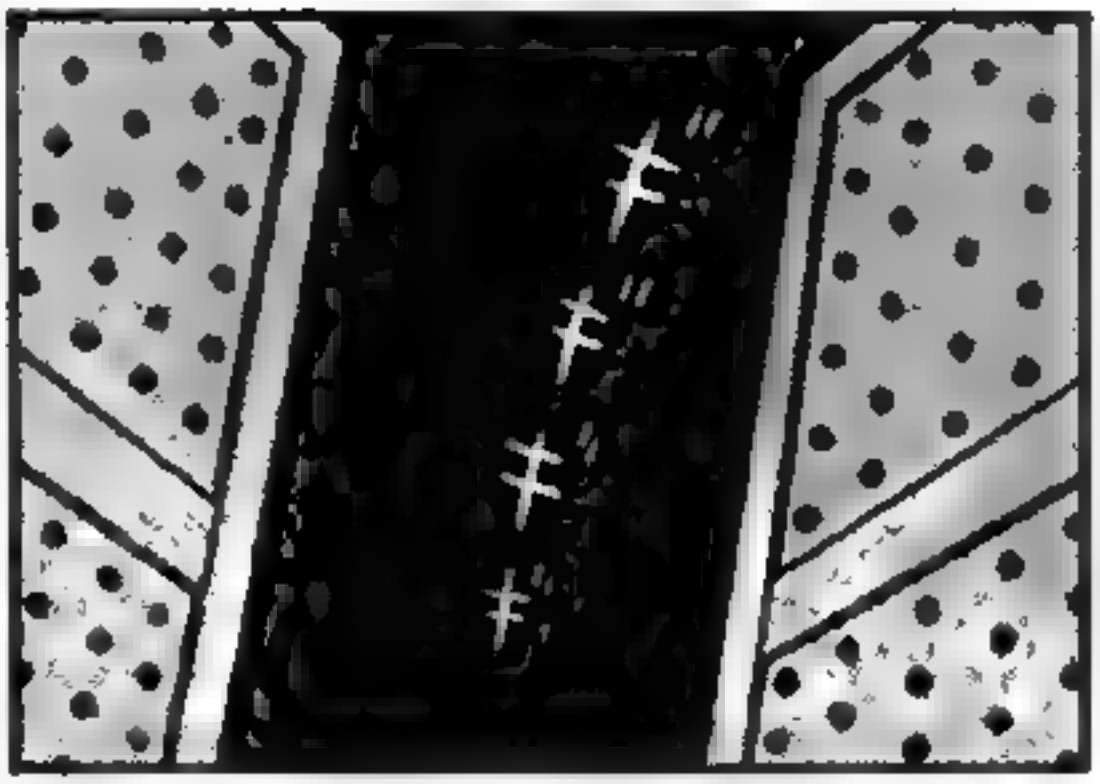

YOU'RE WILLING TO TAKE THE RISK?
ENTRUST THAT TASK TO THIS LOYAL LIAO HUA, BUT BE READY TO SEND OUT A SECOND RIDER AT ONCE IF I WERE TO BE CAPTURED.

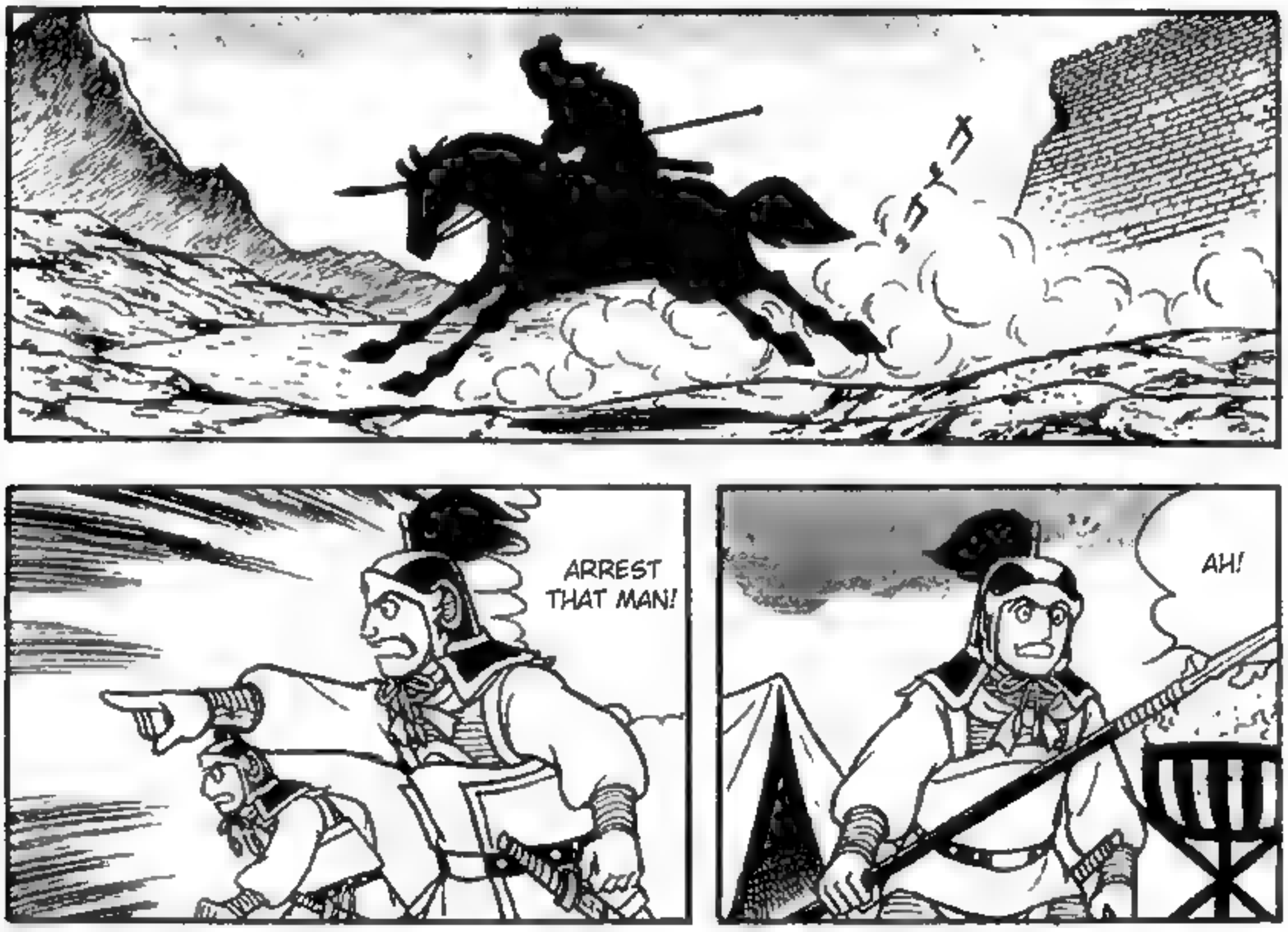





THANK YOU.
I PRAY FOR YOUR SAFETY.






ARREST THAT MAN!
AH!
DON'T LET HIM ESCAPE!
HALT!


RIGHT AWAY!


GUAN PING! DIVERT THEIR ATTENTION!




ENEMIES ARE SALLYING FORTH!


HM?



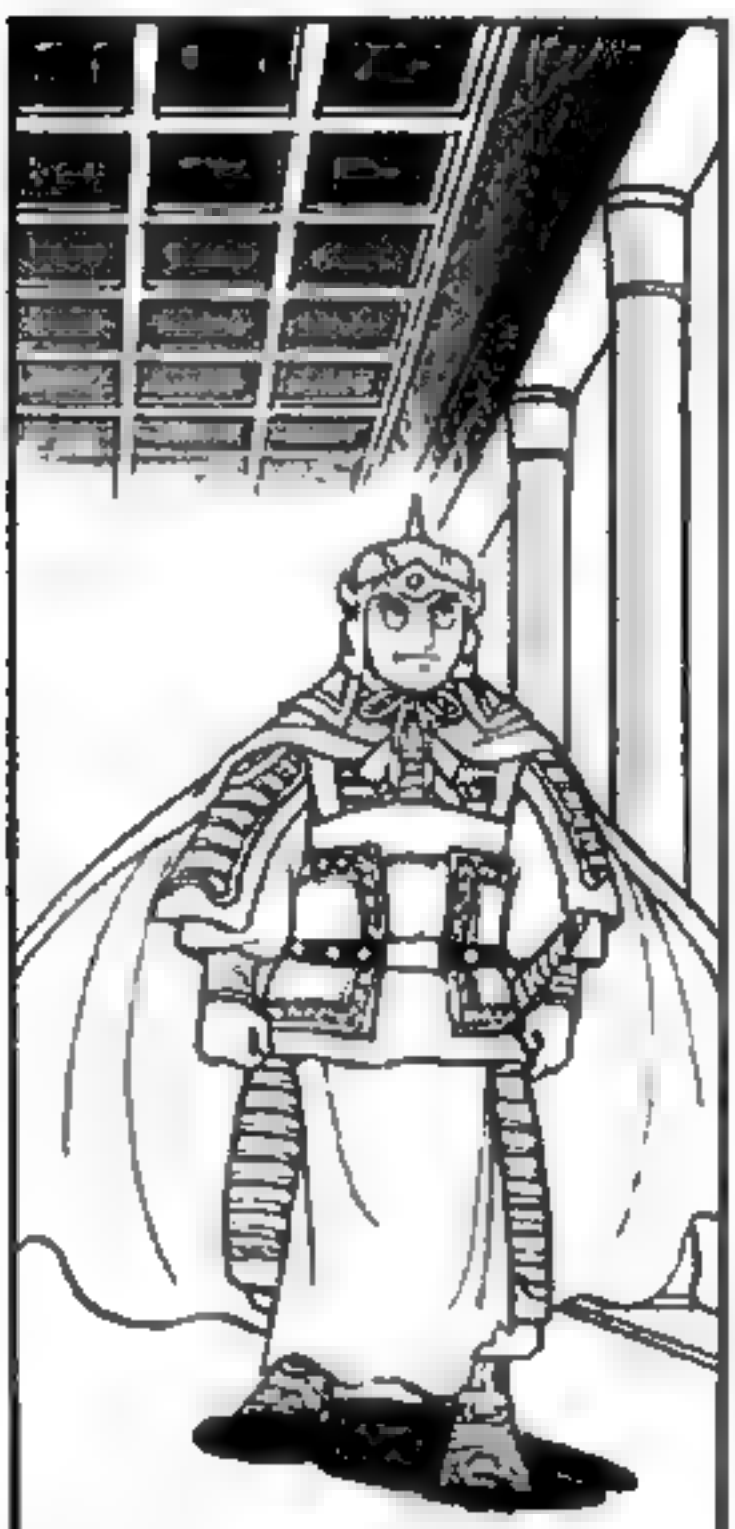

NOW'S MY CHANCE!












YES, LIAO HUA BRINGS A LETTER.
WHAT, A MESSENGER FROM GUAN YU!?

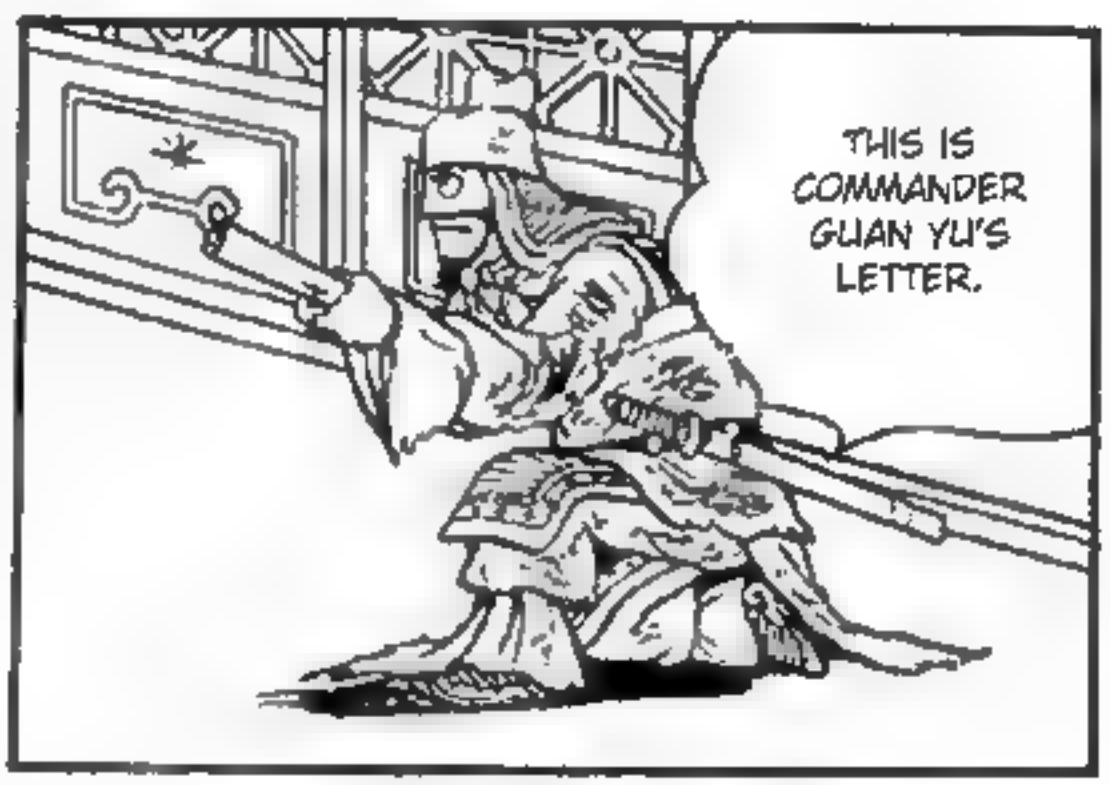

HM?


Y-YOU'RE THE MES-SENGER?




YES.



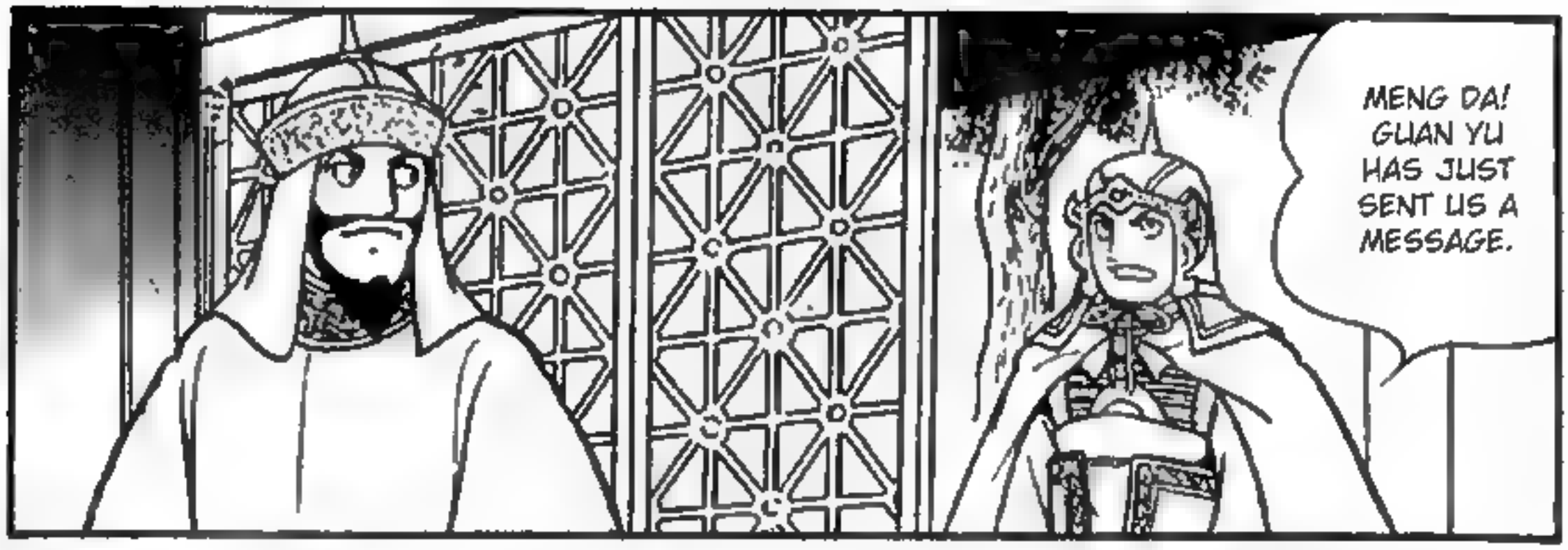

THIS IS COMMANDER GUAN YU'S LETTER.

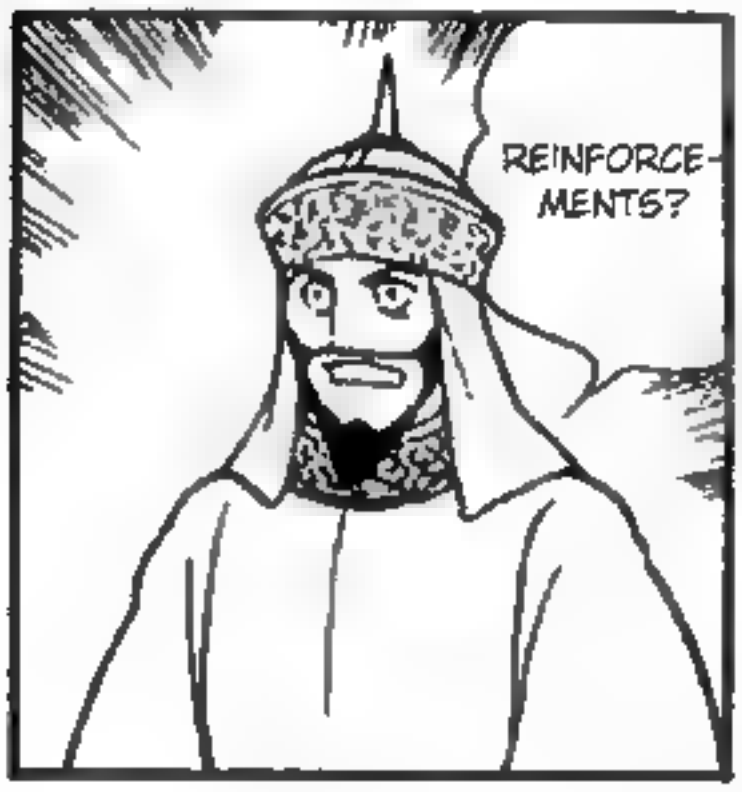
I MUST DISCUSS THE MATTER WITH MENG DA. PLEASE GET SOME REST IN THE MEAN-WHILE.

YES.

THE WU ARMY HAS US COMPLETELY SURROUNDED. IMMEDIATE AID IS NECESSARY.

TRAPPED IN MAICHENG WITH A FORCE OF ONLY 500?


MENG DA! GUAN YU HAS JUST SENT US A MESSAGE.


REINFORCE-MENTS?


WE CANNOT DO THAT!


HE'S BESIEGED BY THE WU ARMY AND REQUESTS WE SEND REINFORCEMENTS.
WHAT DID HE SAY?


WE'VE ONLY RECENTLY CONQUERED SHANGYONG AND IT'S FAR FROM PACIFIED YET. WE CANNOT JUST TAKE OUR ARMY AWAY FROM HERE AND EXPECT NOTHING TO GO WRONG.


WHAT!? YOU REFUSE TO HELP!?

IF YOU COULD SAVE HIM, YOU SHOULD OF COURSE SAVE HIM.

GUAN YU IS A SWORN BROTHER TO MY FATHER! I CANNOT JUST ABANDON HIM TO HIS FATE!

WHAT CAN YOU EVEN ACCOMPLISH BY DIVING BETWEEN WU AND WEI'S VAST FORCES? SURELY, YOU WOULD ONLY BE RUSHING TO YOUR OWN DEATH.

BUT LOOK AT THE SITUATION! THE WU FORCE IN JINGZHOU IS THREE OR FOUR HUNDRED THOUSAND, WHILE CAO CAO'S ARMY AT MOBEI NUMBERS FOUR OR FIVE HUNDRED THOUSAND! MOREOVER, MAICHENG IS AN OLD FORT THAT IS FAR FROM IMPENETRABLE.

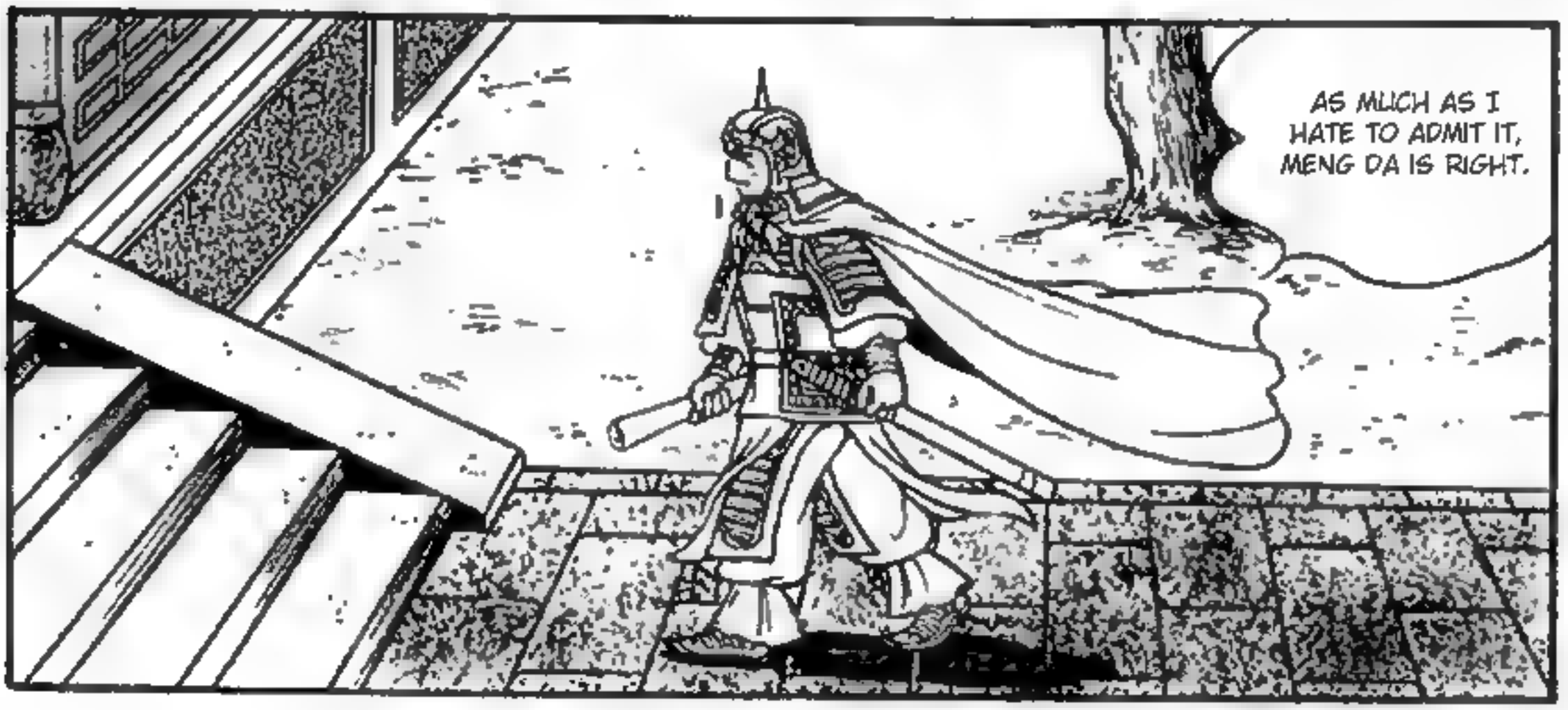
TELL THE MESSENGER TO GO SEE OUR LORD INSTEAD, THE KING OF HANZHONG.

I UNDERSTAND ALL THAT BUT EVEN SO... I CANNOT JUST STAND BY AND WATCH HIM DIE.


MMN...


WITH OUR NUMBERS, HOLDING ONTO IS SHANGYONG IS ENOUGH OF A BURDEN. WE CANNOT POSSIBLY DO MORE.


I... I UNDERSTAND.
I KNOW THIS RESPONSE WON'T GO OVER WELL, BUT FRANKLY, IT'S THE ONLY REASONABLE CHOICE.


AS MUCH AS I HATE TO ADMIT IT, MENG DA IS RIGHT.

TAKE THIS LETTER TO MY FATHER. HE IS THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN HELP.

GUAN YU WILL DIE BEFORE OUR LORD CAN SEND AID!

YES, FOR THE REASONS I JUST OUTLINED.

YOU REFUSE TO SEND REINFORCE-MENTS!?

HOW CAN YOU EXPECT ME TO EXTINGUISH A WILDFIRE WITH A SINGLE CUP OF WATER?

SO YOU'RE JUST GOING TO STAND BY AND WATCH US DIE...?

PLEASE UNDER-STAND I HAVE MY DUTIES HERE TOO AND THERE'S A LIMIT TO MY POWER.

IT SEEMS ANY MORE WORDS WILL BE WASTED ON YOU.

O-OF COURSE I KNOW! BUT WHAT COULD I DO WITH SUCH FEW MEN?

DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA HOW HARD COMMANDER GUAN YU HAS WORKED FOR OUR KING OF HANZHONG!?

LIAO HUA RODE FOR CHENGDU, FUMING WITH RAGE

FINE! I SHALL TAKE MY CASE DIRECTLY TO HIS HIGHNESS!

NO REINFORCEMENTS







MOREOVER, THE FORT'S GRAIN STORES WERE RUNNING LOW

吳

吳

吳

吳

吳

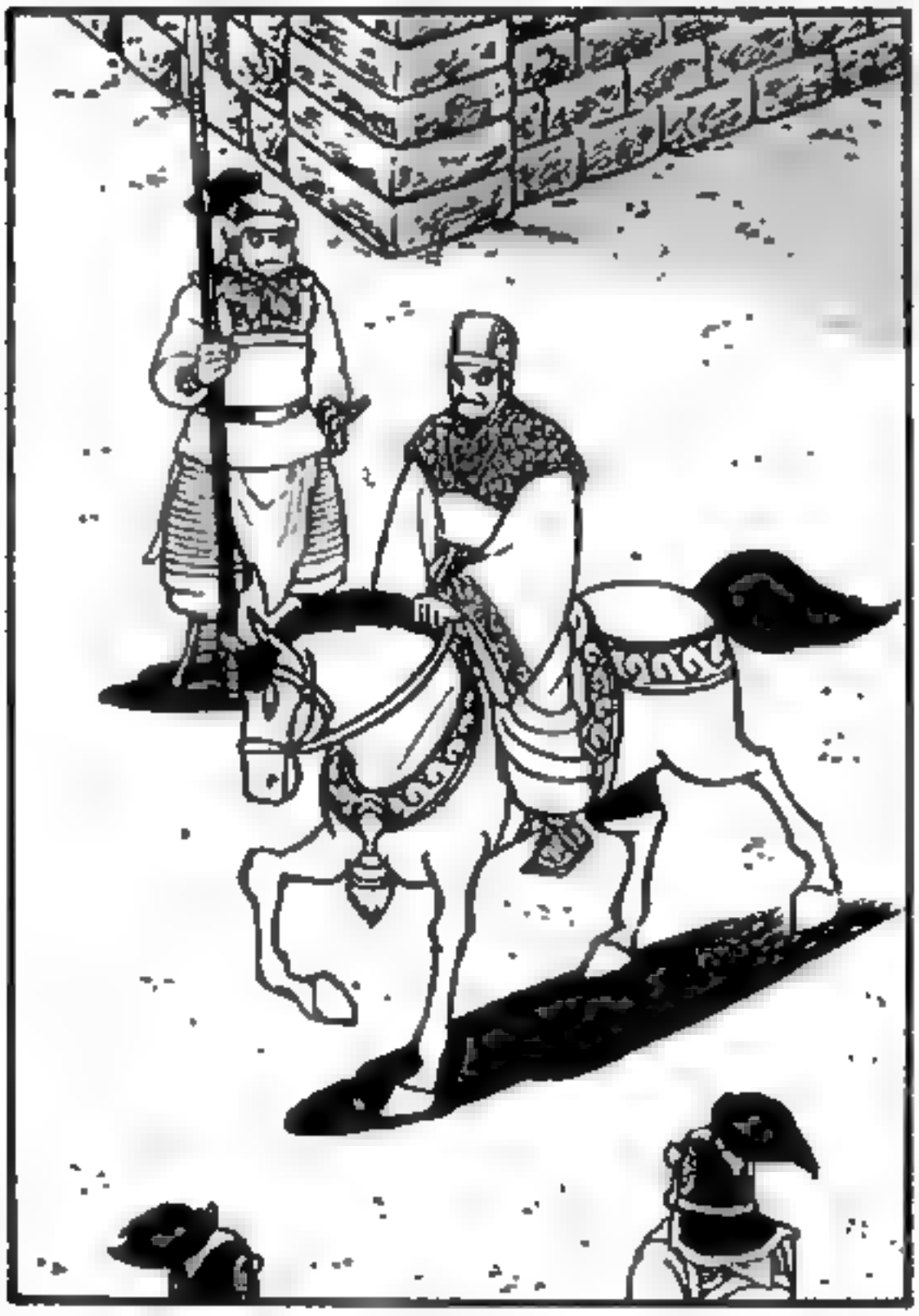
HM?






DO NOT SHOOT! I AM ZHUGE JIN, BROTHER OF ZHUGE LIANG! I COME TO SPEAK TO GENERAL GUAN YU!


LET HIM IN!

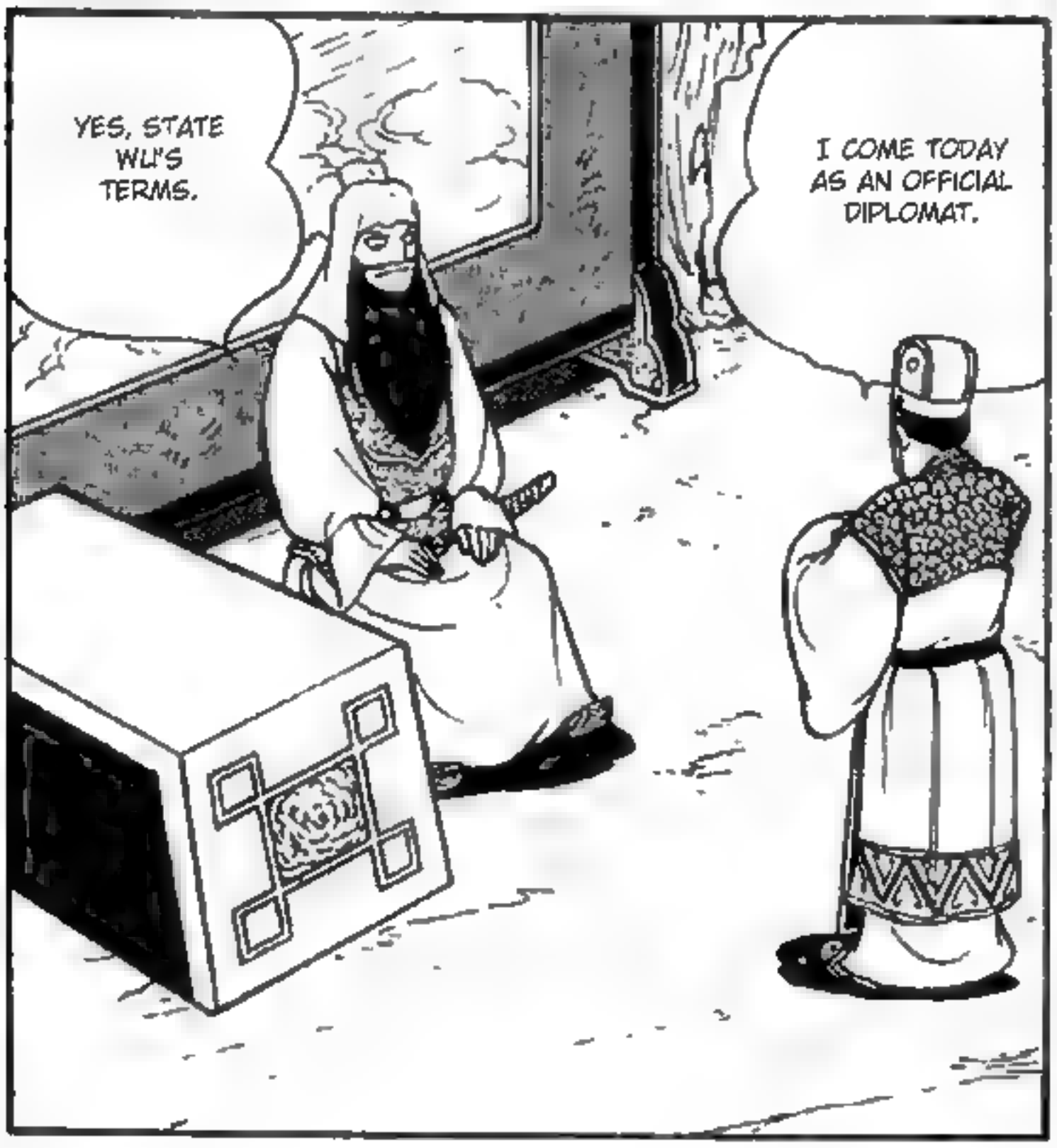







A PLEASURE TO SEE YOU AGAIN, SIR.


AH, ZHUGE JIN. IT'S BEEN A WHILE SINCE WE LAST MET.


YES, STATE WU'S TERMS.
I COME TODAY AS AN OFFICIAL DIPLOMAT.

ALREADY, WE HAVE TAKEN CONTROL OF ALL OF JINGZHOU'S COMMANDERIES. ONLY THIS PITIFUL FORT NOW STILL LIES OUTSIDE OUR CONTROL.

IS THAT WHAT SUN QUAN WISHES?

OUTSIDE, YOU HAVE NO REINFORCEMENTS COMING. INSIDE, YOU HAVE NO MORE GRAIN. HOW CAN YOU HOPE TO FIGHT ANY FURTHER? IF ONLY YOU WOULD SURRENDER, MY LORD MAY RESTORE YOU OF YOUR GOVERNORSHIP OF JINGZHOU.

MY LORD WISHES NOTHING MORE THAN TO STRIKE DOWN CAO CAO AND RETURN THE HAN EMPEROR TO HIS RIGHTFUL AUTHORITY.

I HAVE SWORN AN OATH OF BROTHERHOOD WITH THE KING OF HANZHONG, AND I HAVE NO INTENTION OF BETRAYING IT BY SERVING ANOTHER LORD. IF THIS FORT CANNOT HOLD ANY LONGER, THAN DEATH IS MY ONLY PATH.

I BEG YOU TO RECONSIDER, SIR!

SAY NO MORE!

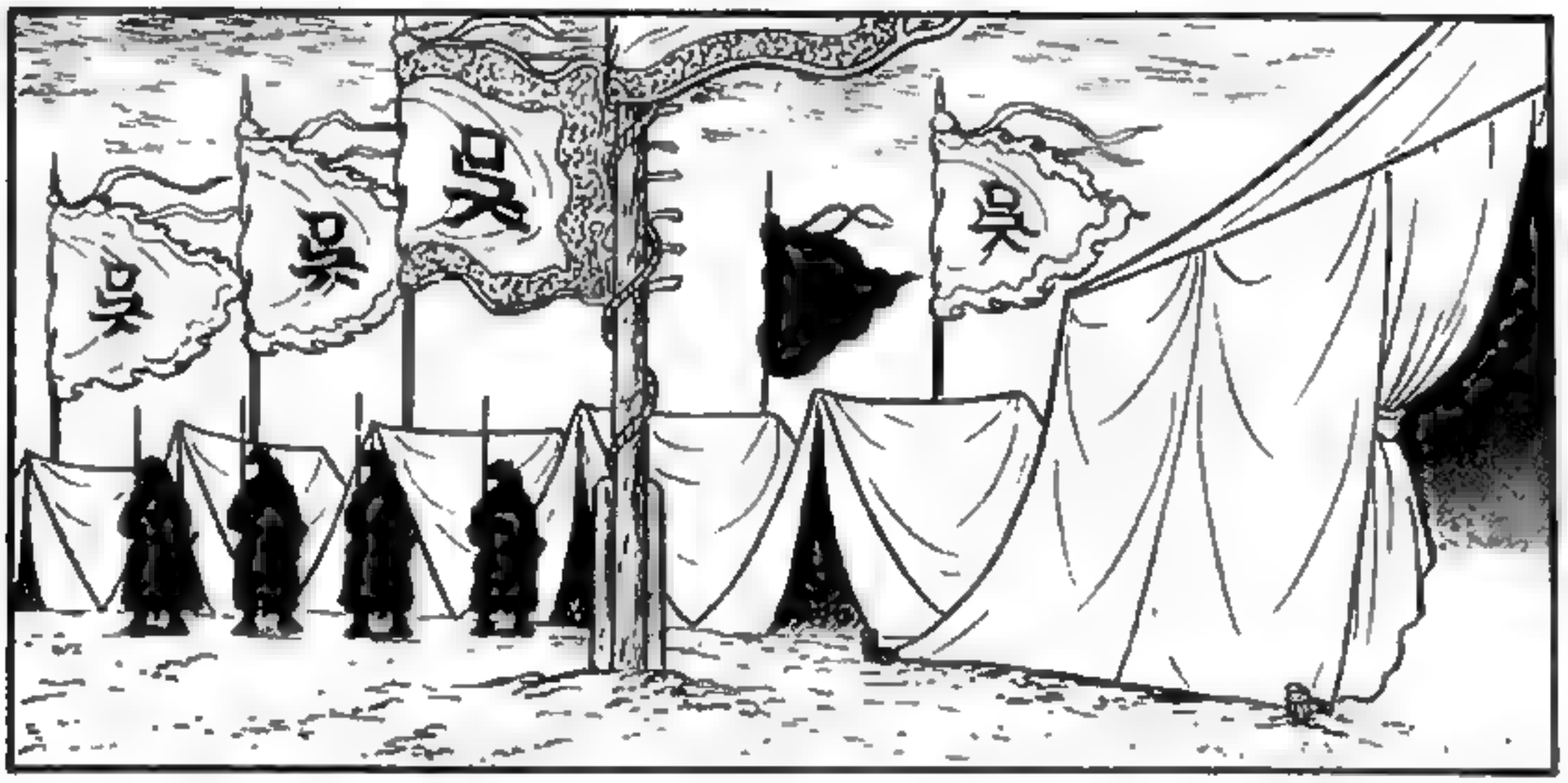
SILENCE! SULLY OUR RESOLVE WITH FURTHER WORDS AND I WILL CUT YOU DOWN HERE AND NOW!

NO, YOU WERE ONLY DOING YOUR DUTIES.

I SEE, FORGIVE MY COMING HERE TODAY THEN.

STOP. REMEMBER THAT HE IS ZHUGE LIANG'S BROTHER.

BUT IT IS AS MY SON SAID. TRYING TO PERSUADE US IS FUTILE. WITHDRAW NOW.


吳
吳
吳
吳


HE HAS NO EARS FOR SUCH TALK, SIR.
SO HE WILL NOT SURRENDER?


I HAVE JUST THE PLAN FOR THAT, MY LORD.


STILL, TO KILL HIM WOULD BE A WASTE... I MUST TAKE HIM ALIVE SOMEHOW...

THEN THEIR WILL TO FIGHT MUST BE AT A BREAKING POINT.

YES, OVER HALF OF THEM, IN FACT...

ZHUGE JIN, YOU SAID THERE WERE MANY WOUNDED SOLDIERS INSIDE THE FORT?

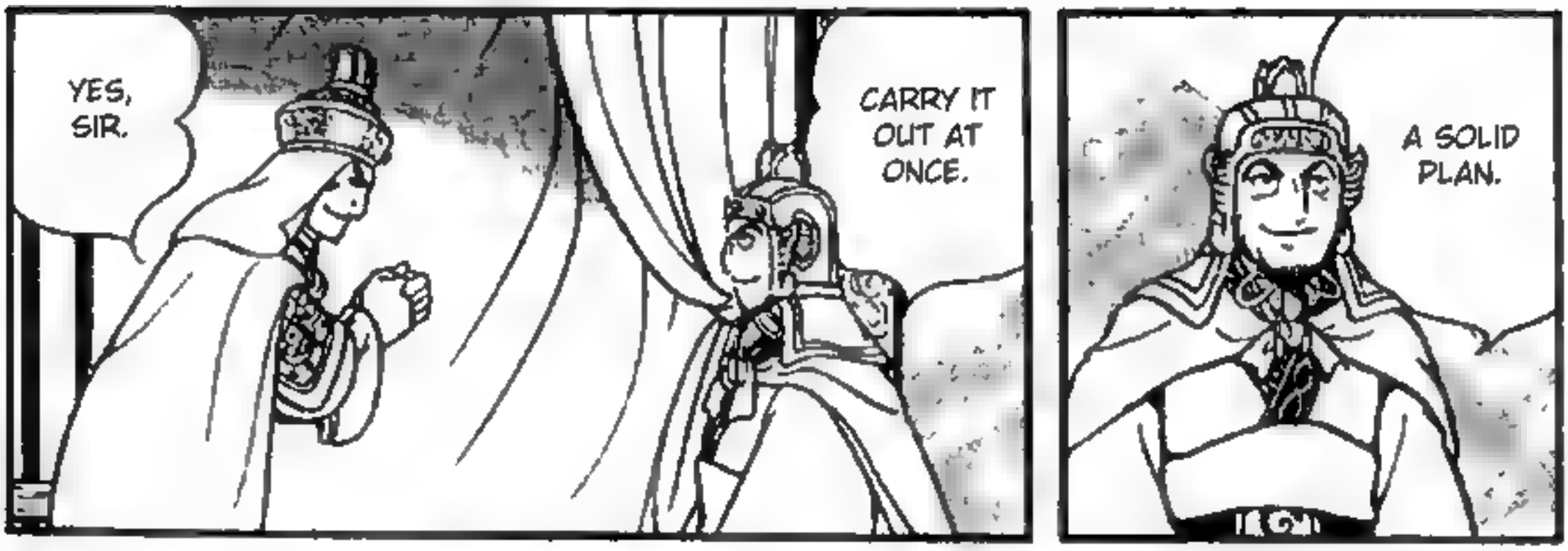
WITHOUT SOLDIERS NOR FOOD, GUAN YU WILL DEFINITELY TRY TO BREAK OUR ENCIRCLEMENT.

HMM, AND THEN WHAT?

LET US HAVE THEIR FAMILY CALL OUT FOR THEIR RETURN. THAT WILL SURELY CAUSE MANY OF THEM TO FLEE THE FORT.

THUS, WE WILL BAIT THEM BY LEAVING FEW SOLDIERS TO GUARD THEIR NORTHERN GATE AND THEN AMBUSH THEM AT THE HILLS.

AND IF HE IS PLANNING ON AN ESCAPE, HE WILL SURELY AVOID THE LARGE, OPEN ROADS AND INSTEAD OPT FOR THE HILLY, NARROW PATH TO THE NORTH.


YES, SIR.
CARRY IT OUT AT ONCE.
A SOLID PLAN.

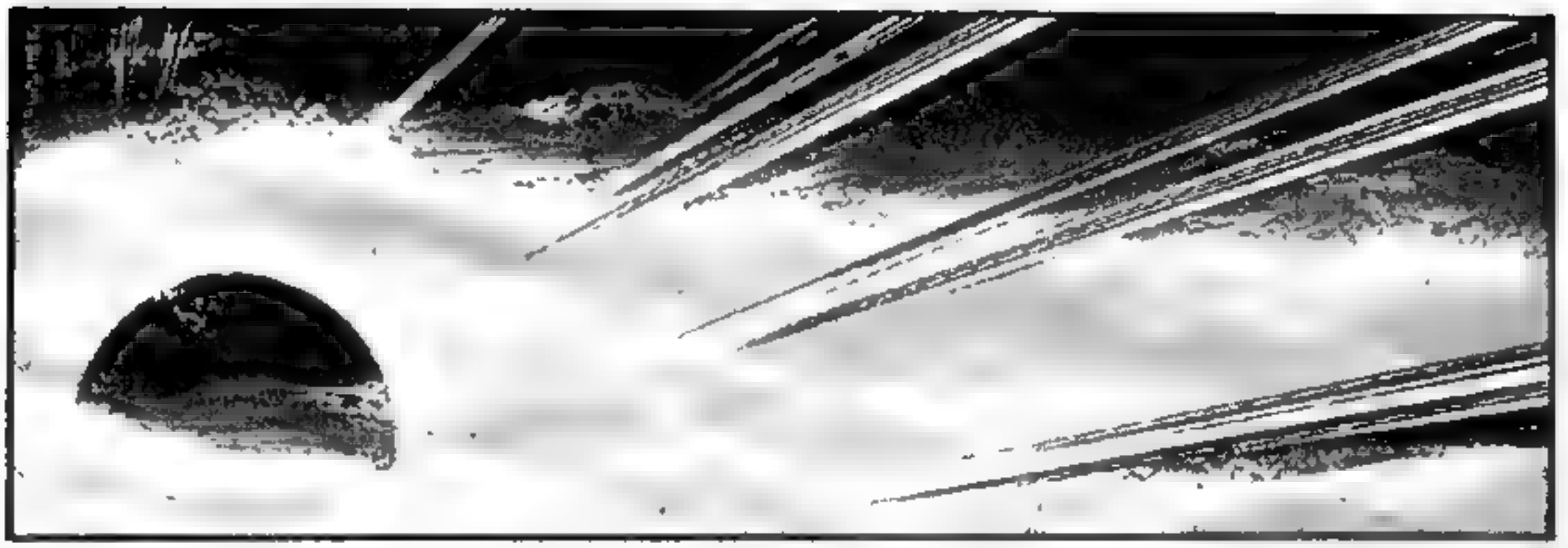

朱
FOLLOWING LU MENG'S PLANS, ZHU RAN TOOK 5000 ELITE SOLDIERS TO THE HILLS 20 LI NORTH FROM MAICHENG


THERE, THEY AWAITED GUAN YU.
朱
朱
朱
朱

BROTHER! IF YOU'RE ALIVE, PLEASE RESPOND!

COME BACK TO US IN JINGZHOU! WE'RE ALL WAITING!

ARE YOU STILL ALIVE, MY SON!?




HOW MANY DO WE STILL HAVE?


YES, THEY FLED LAST NIGHT.
DESERTERS?


ONLY ABOUT 300.


REINFORCEMENTS SHOULD HAVE ARRIVED BY NOW IF LIAO HUA REACHED SHANGYONG SAFELY.


MNN... OUR FOOD IS ALMOST OUT TOO, WHAT CAN WE DO...?

HM...

IT THEN LOGICALLY FOLLOWS THAT LIAO HUA MUST HAVE EITHER DIED OR THAT LIU FENG AND MENG DA REFUSED TO SEND AID.

I'M AFRAID WE MUST LEAVE 100 MEN BEHIND FOR THAT REASON. I WILL STAY.

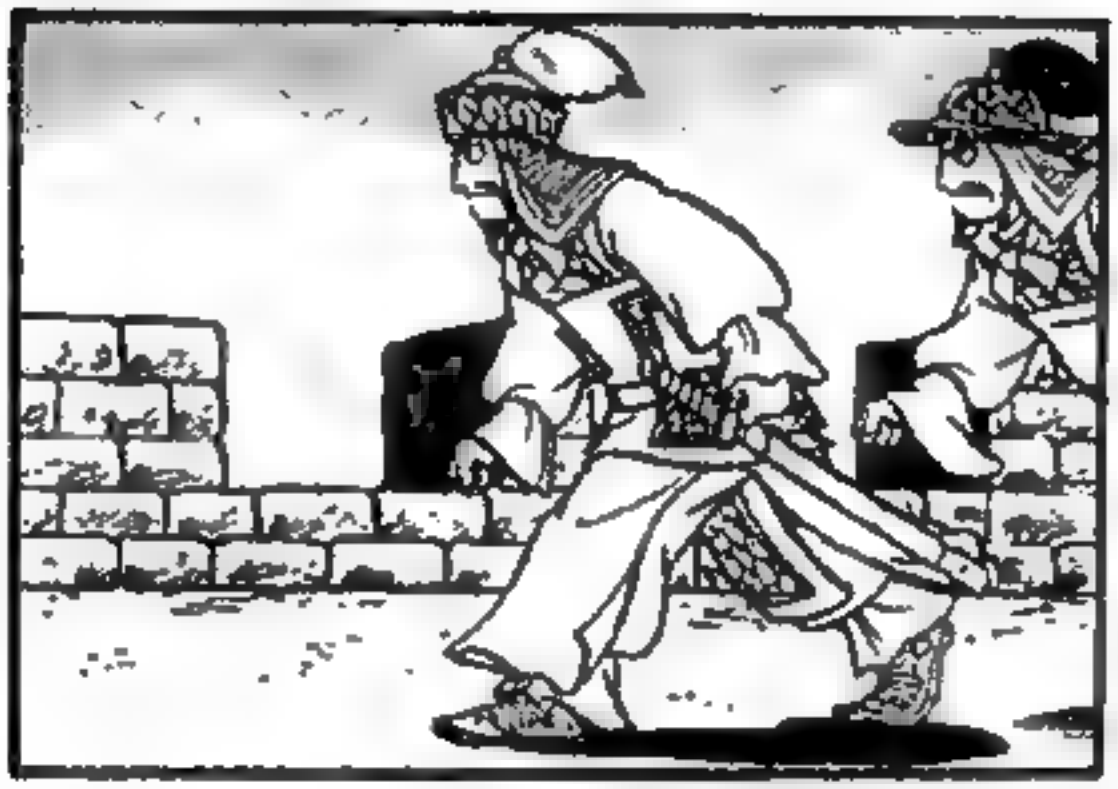
BUT THEY'LL KNOW WE'VE FLED IF THEY SEE THAT THE FORT IS EMPTY.

IF REINFORCEMENTS WILL NOT COME, THEN WE MUST ABANDON OUR POSITION HERE AND FLEE BACK TO SHU. WE CAN ALWAYS PLAN A RECONQUEST OF JINGZHOU IN THE FUTURE.

AS WILL I!

THEN I WILL NOT LET YOUR RISK BE IN VAIN. I WILL BREAK THROUGH THE R ENCIRCLE-MENT TONIGHT.

WANG FU! ZHOU CANG! YOU'RE WILLING TO TAKE THE RISK?




YES.
BUT WE MUST FIRST FIND WHERE THE BEST ESCAPE ROUTE IS.








SIR, THE ENEMIES AROUND THE NORTHERN GATE ARE DISPERSED THINNER COMPARED TO ELSEWHERE.



HM..

吳

吳

吳

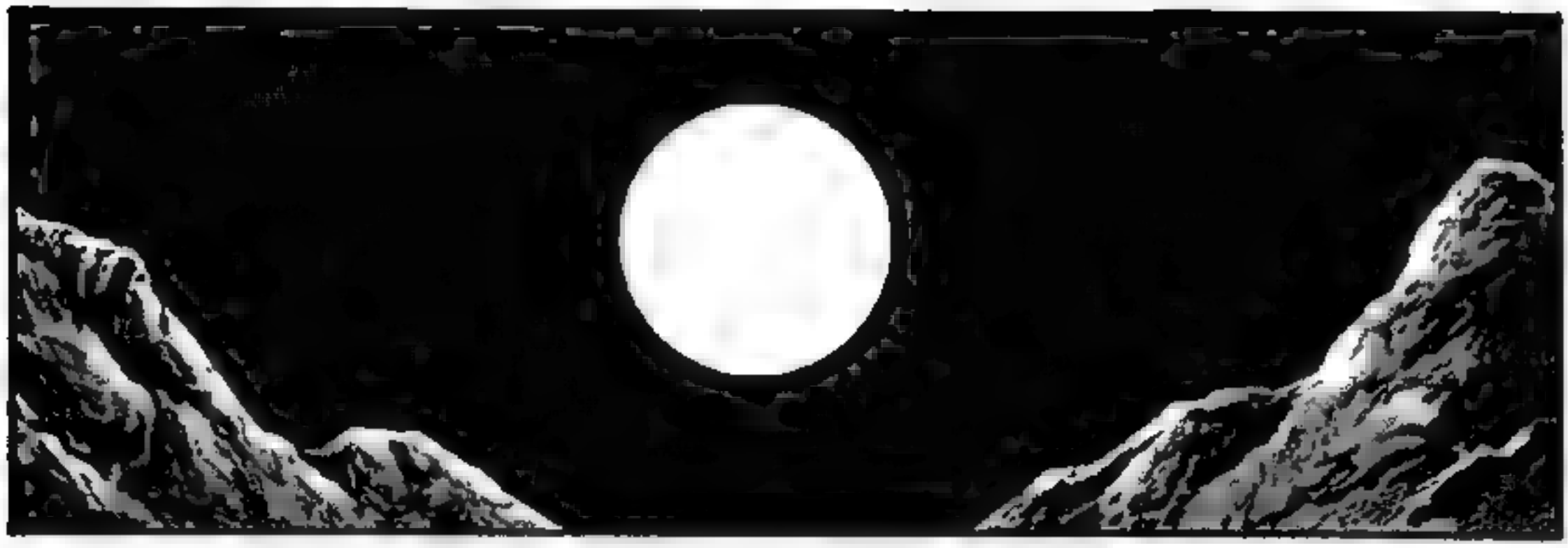
吳

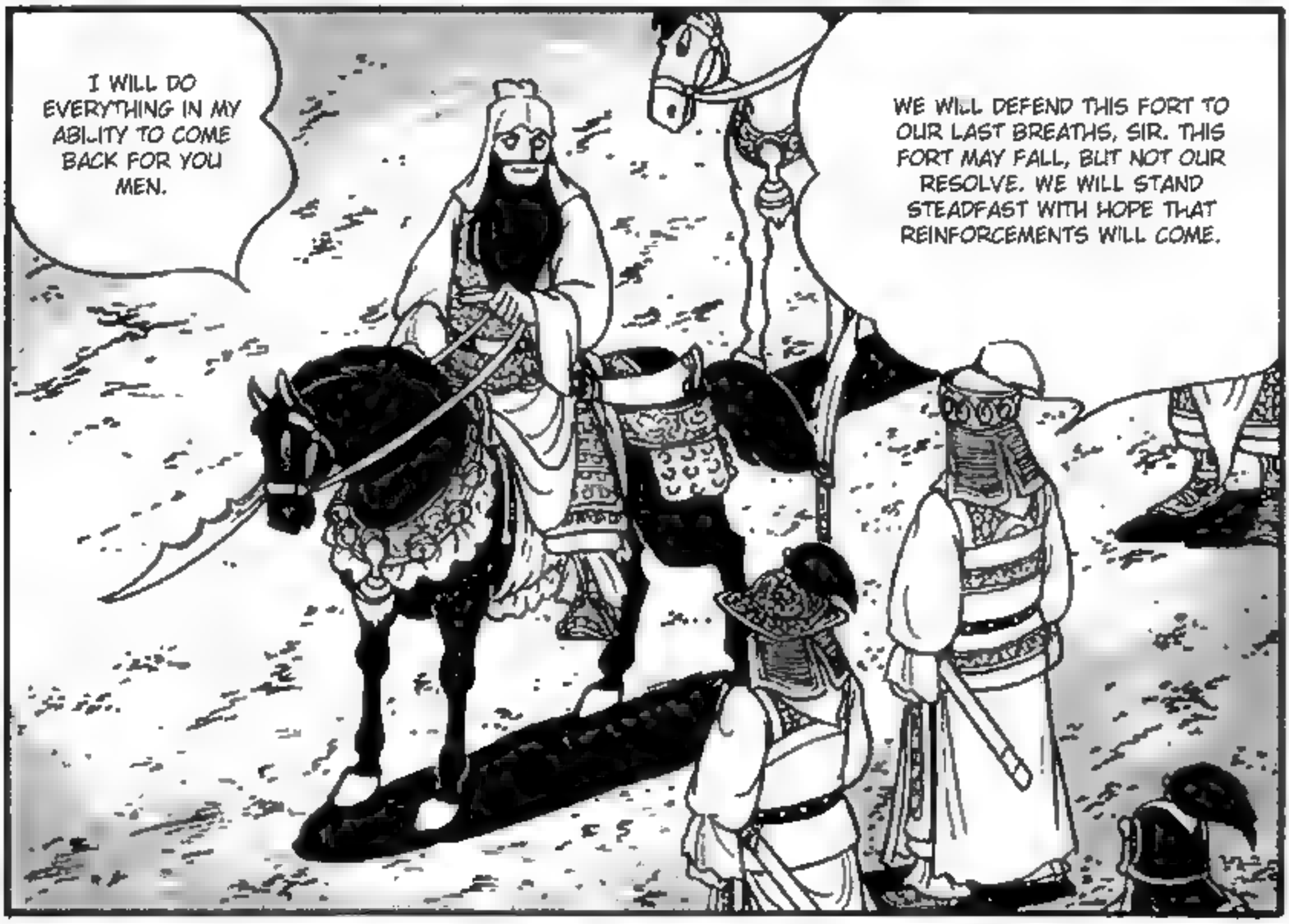
吳

吳

吳

YES, I SHOULD BE ABLE TO MAKE A BREAK-THROUGH




I WILL DO EVERYTHING IN MY ABILITY TO COME BACK FOR YOU MEN.
WE WILL DEFEND THIS FORT TO OUR LAST BREATHS, SIR. THIS FORT MAY FALL, BUT NOT OUR RESOLVE. WE WILL STAND STEADFAST WITH HOPE THAT REINFORCEMENTS WILL COME.


YES, SIR.

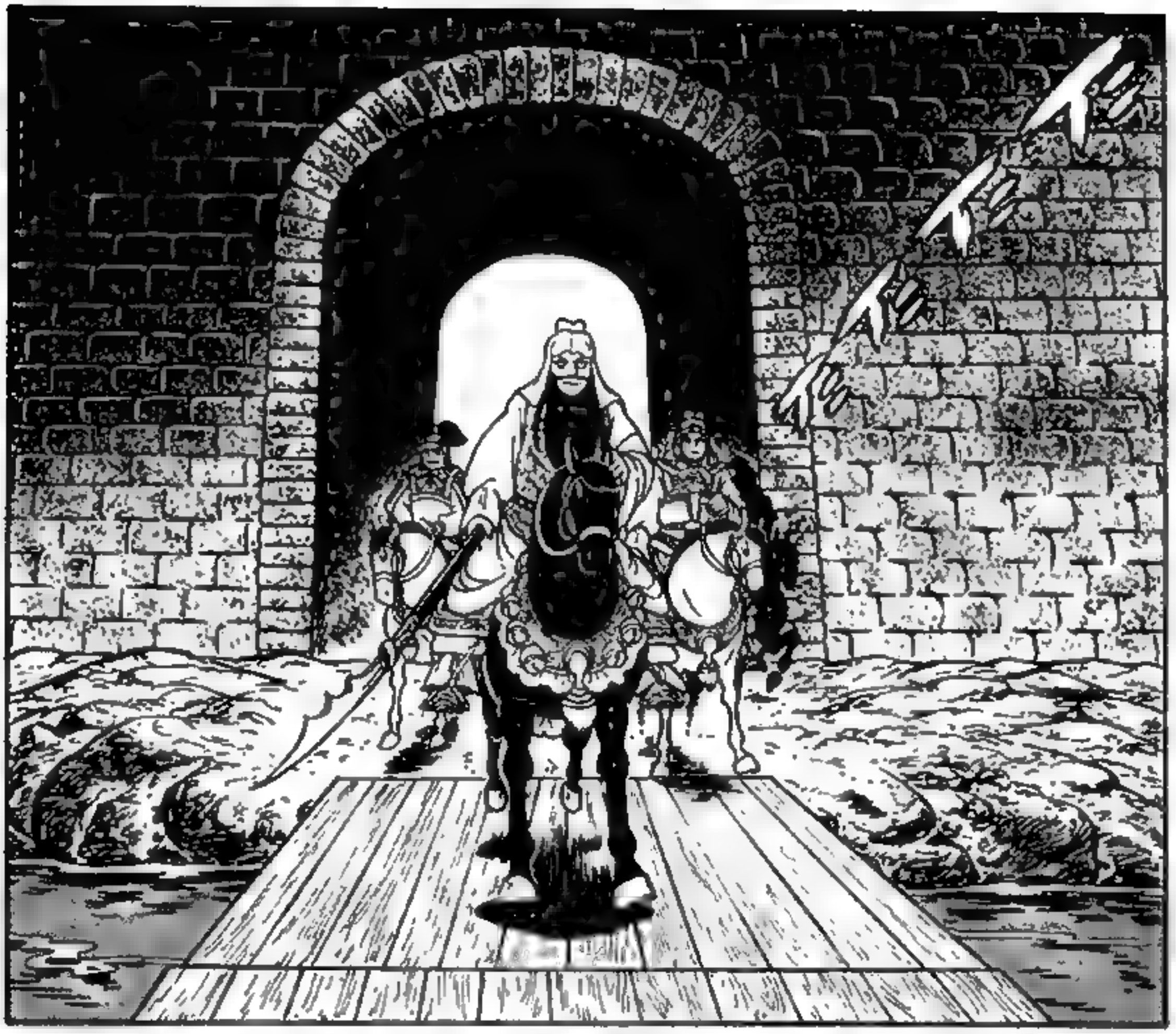

MAY YOU BE STILL ALIVE WHEN I RETURN WITH AID.

YES, SIR.

OPEN THE GATES.

DOOM

QUICKLY!


AH!




IT'S GUAN YU!


AH!












AGHHH!
ACK!


CHARGE RIGHT THROUGH!
吳
吳

BUT WE MUST STILL HURRY, LEST WE MAKE THE SACRIFICES OF THOSE WHO REMAINED BE IN VAIN!

YES.

FATHER, THE PLAN'S GOING WELL.

AHH!

AH!










NO WONDER THINGS WERE GOING SO SMOOTHLY...
IT'S AN AMBUSH!


WE DON'T HAVE MUCH TIME. THE MEN BACK IN THE FORT ARE COUNTING ON OUR SUCCESS...
WE ONLY HAVE 200 MEN, WHILE THEY SEEM TO NUMBER SEVERAL THOUSAND. FIGHTING IS FUTILE.


SHOULD WE FIGHT OUR WAY OUT?


MEN! RUN TOWARDS THE VALLEY!


THEN LET US ESCAPE TOWARDS THAT VALLEY PAST THESE REEDS!

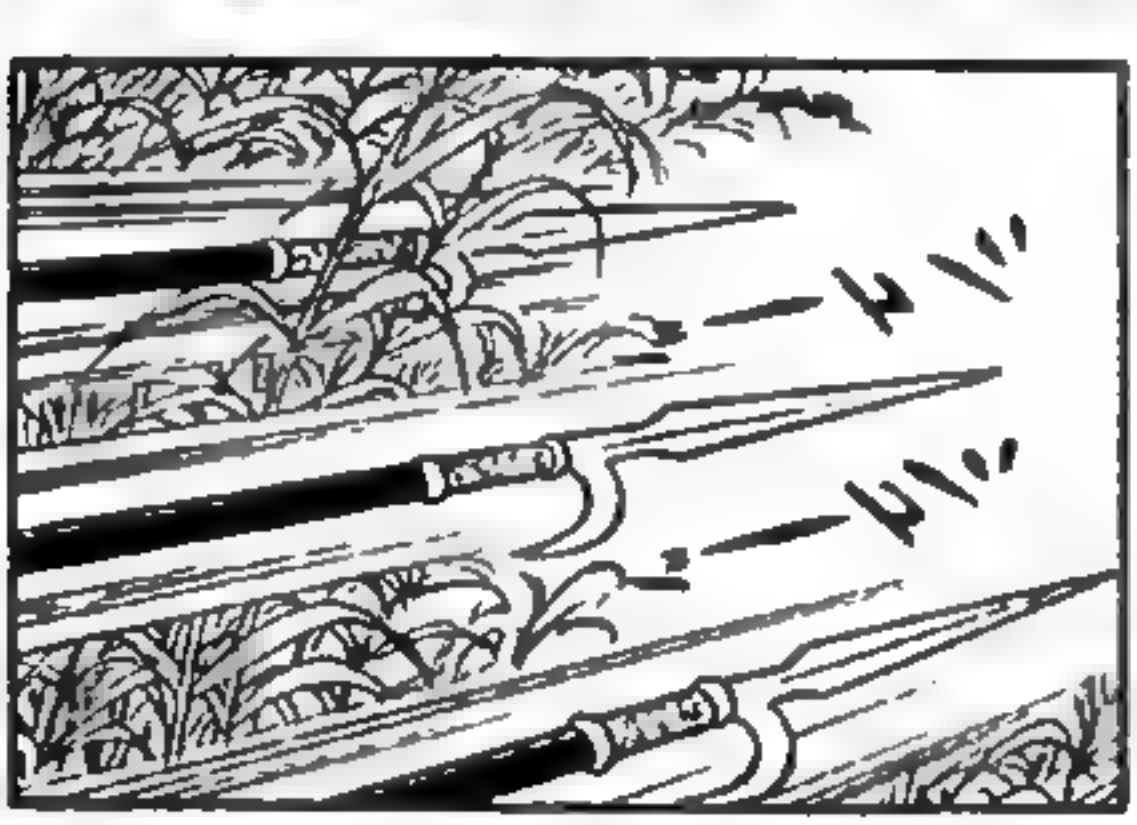



HERE THEY COME.




AIM FOR THE LEGS OF THE HORSES TO DISMOUNT THEM.





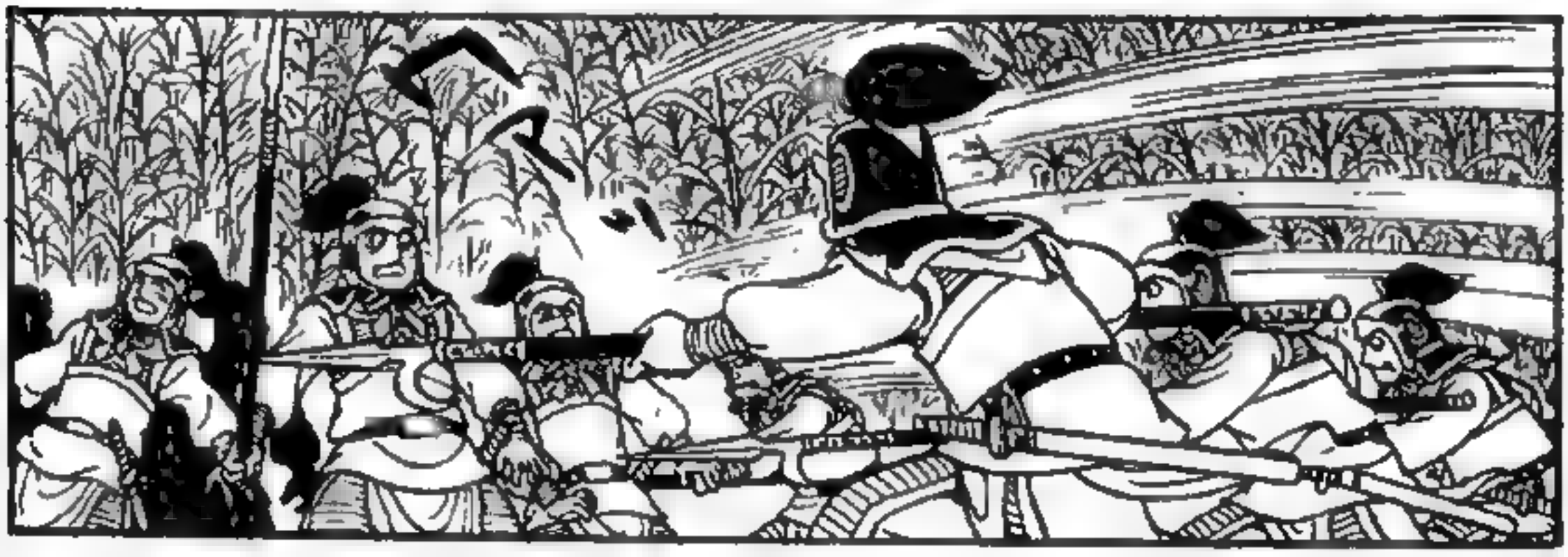


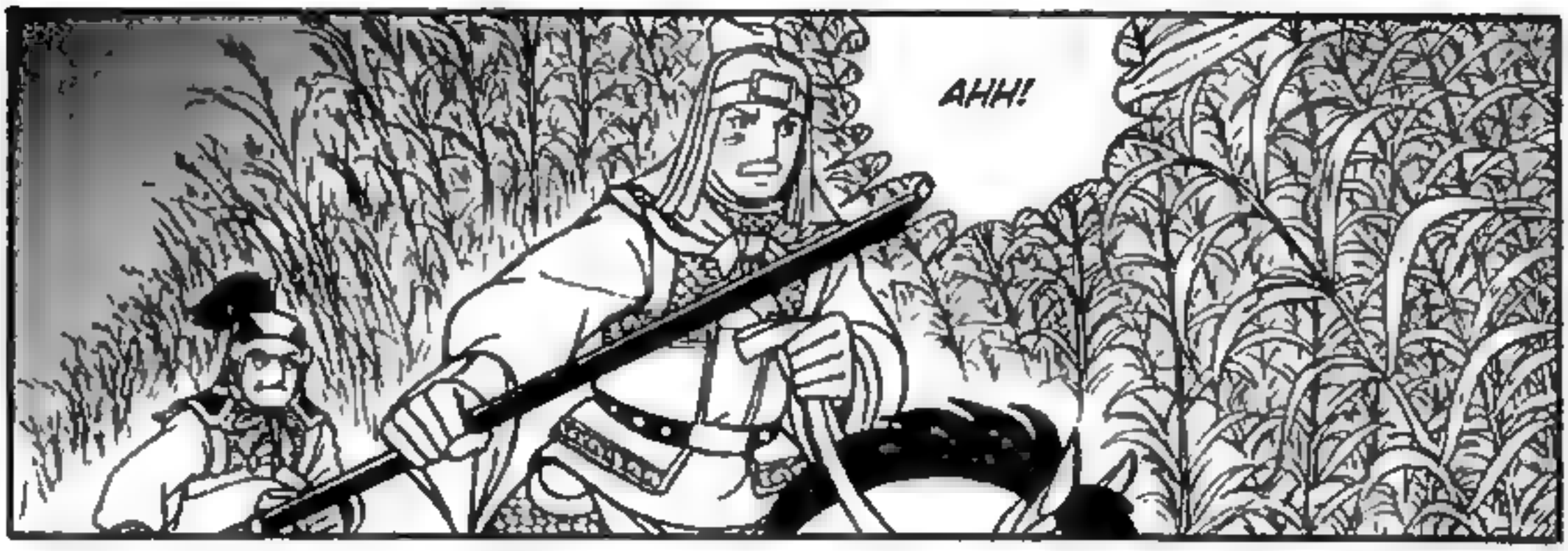


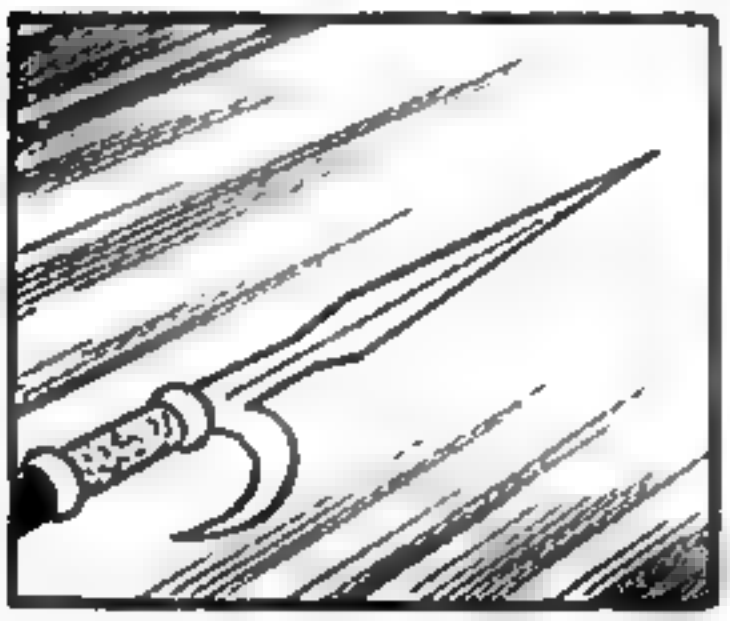

AGHHH!

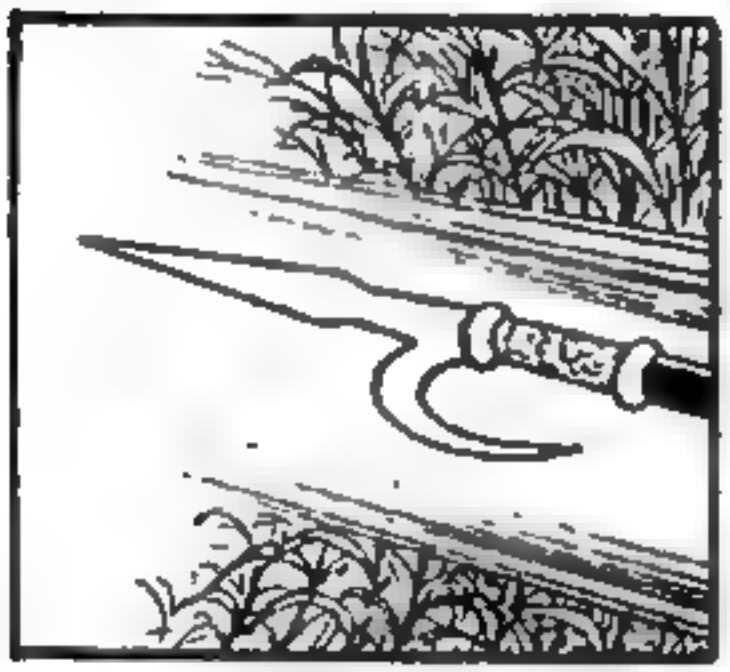


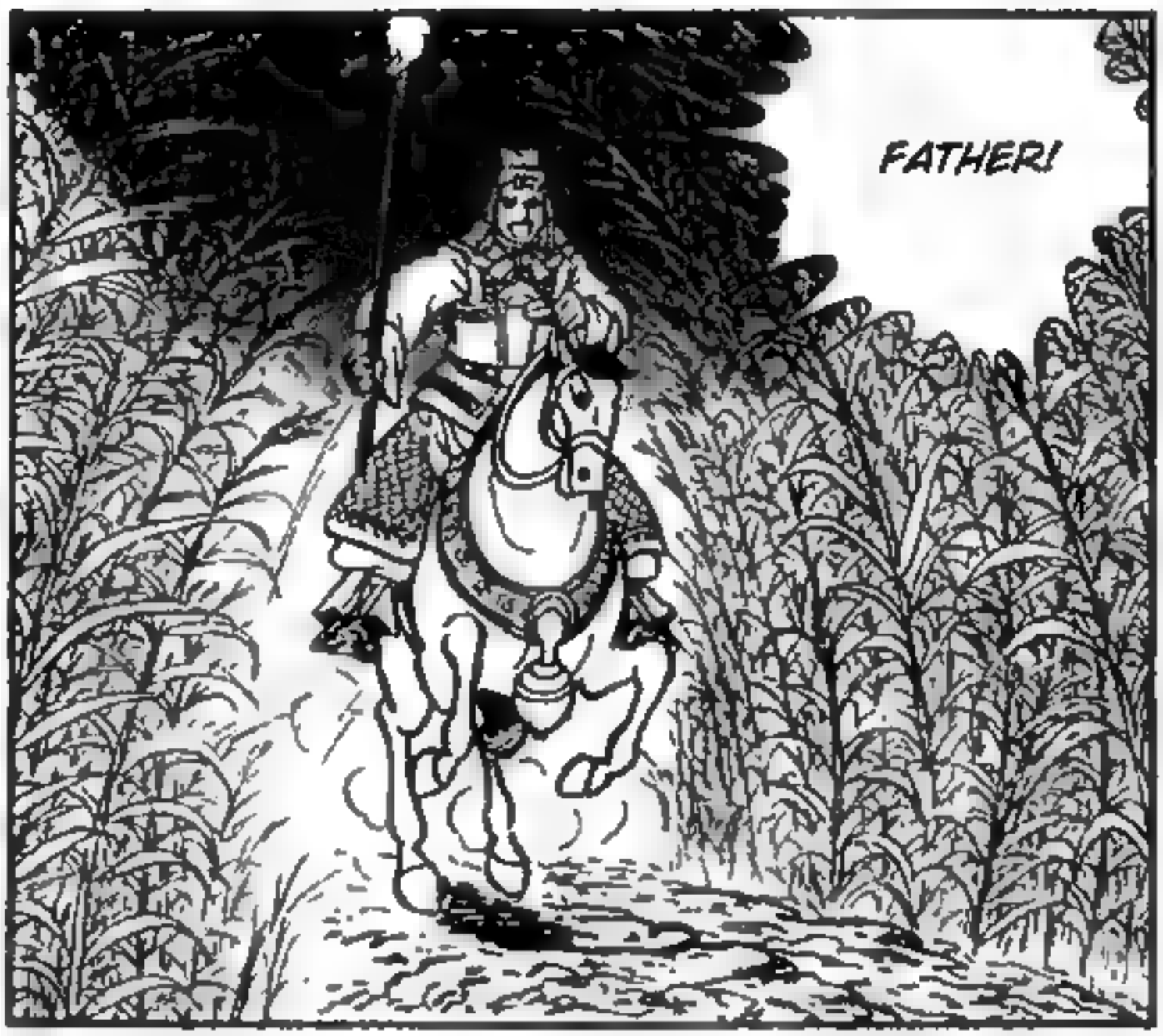

NOW!



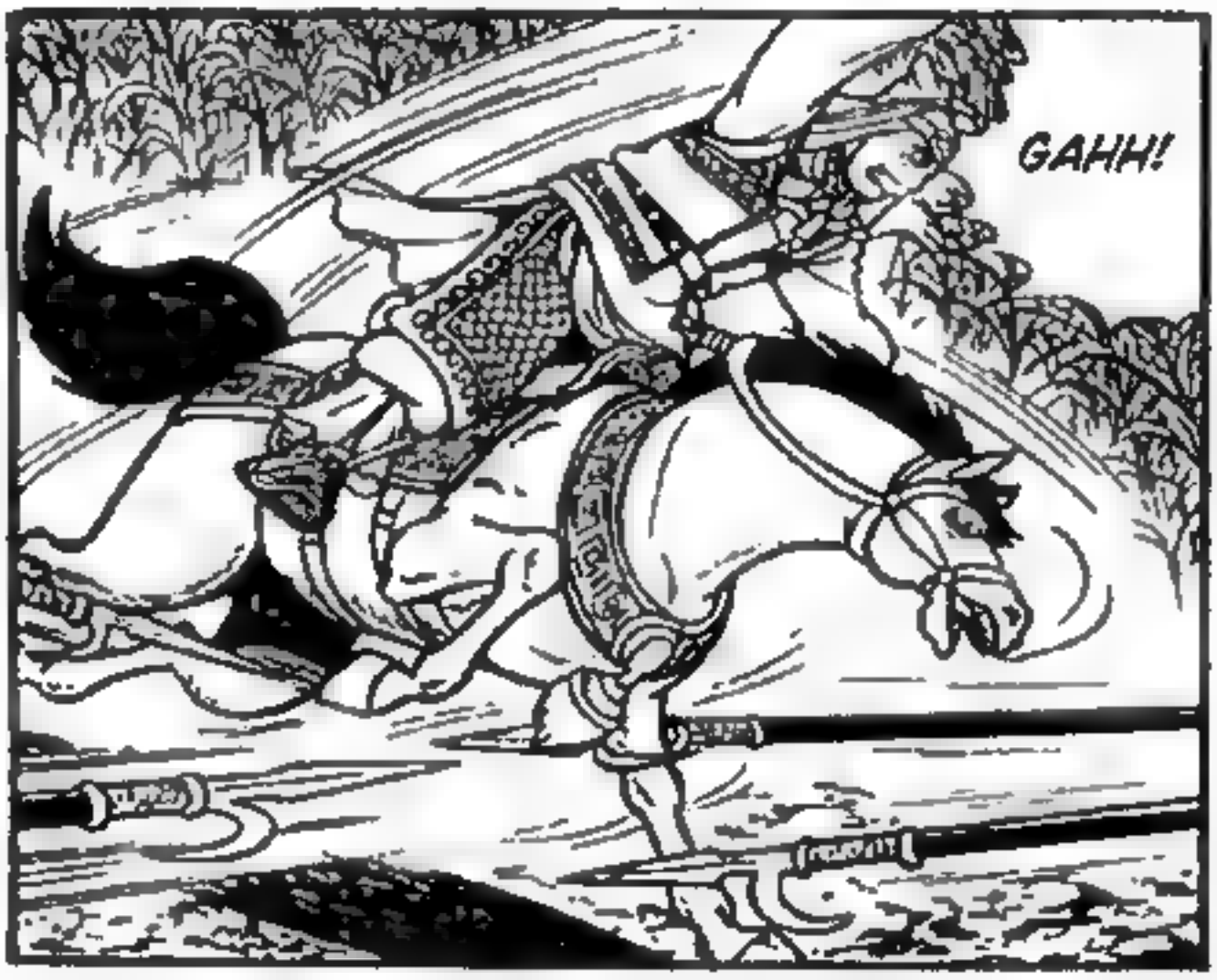

AHH!

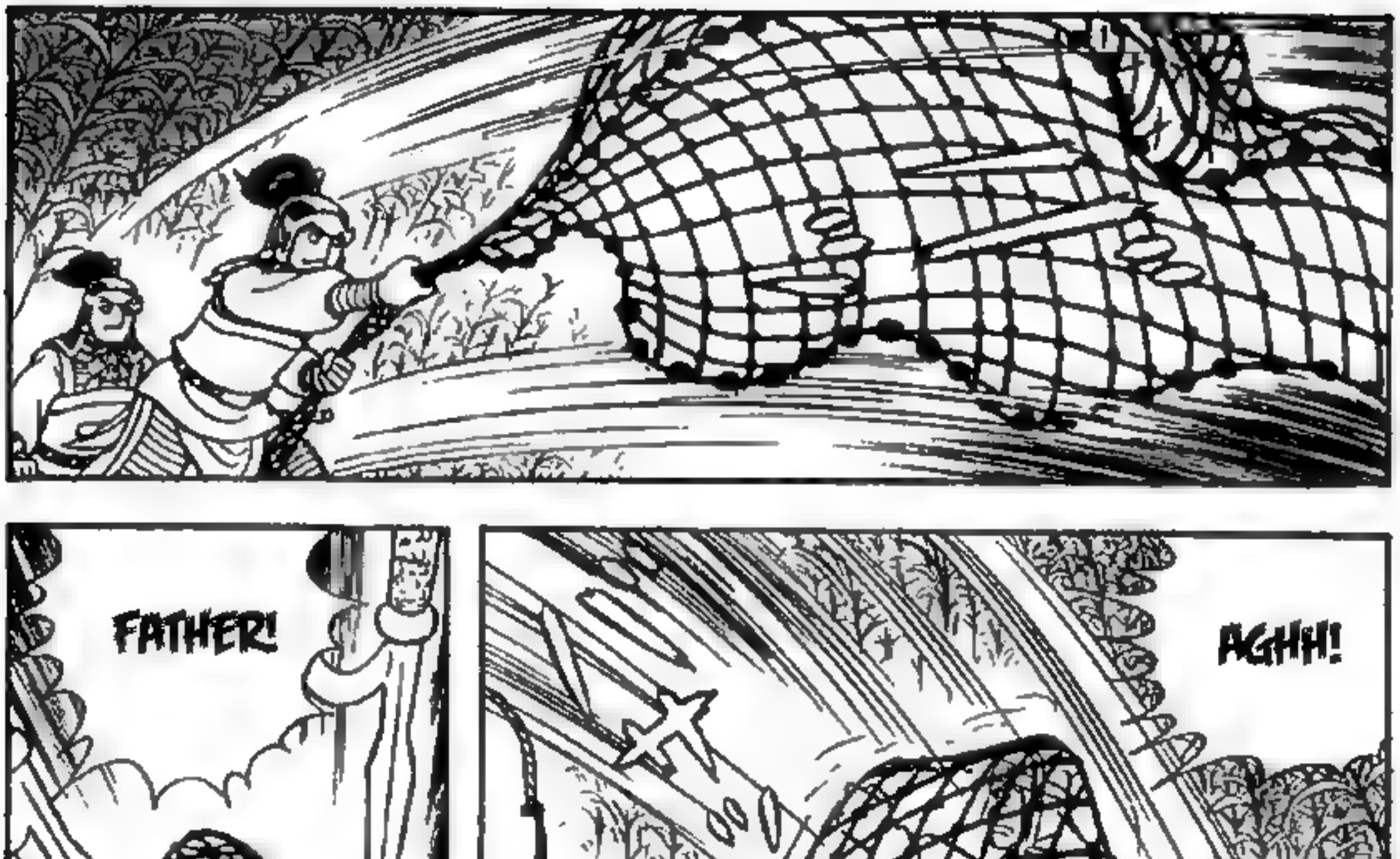





FATHER!

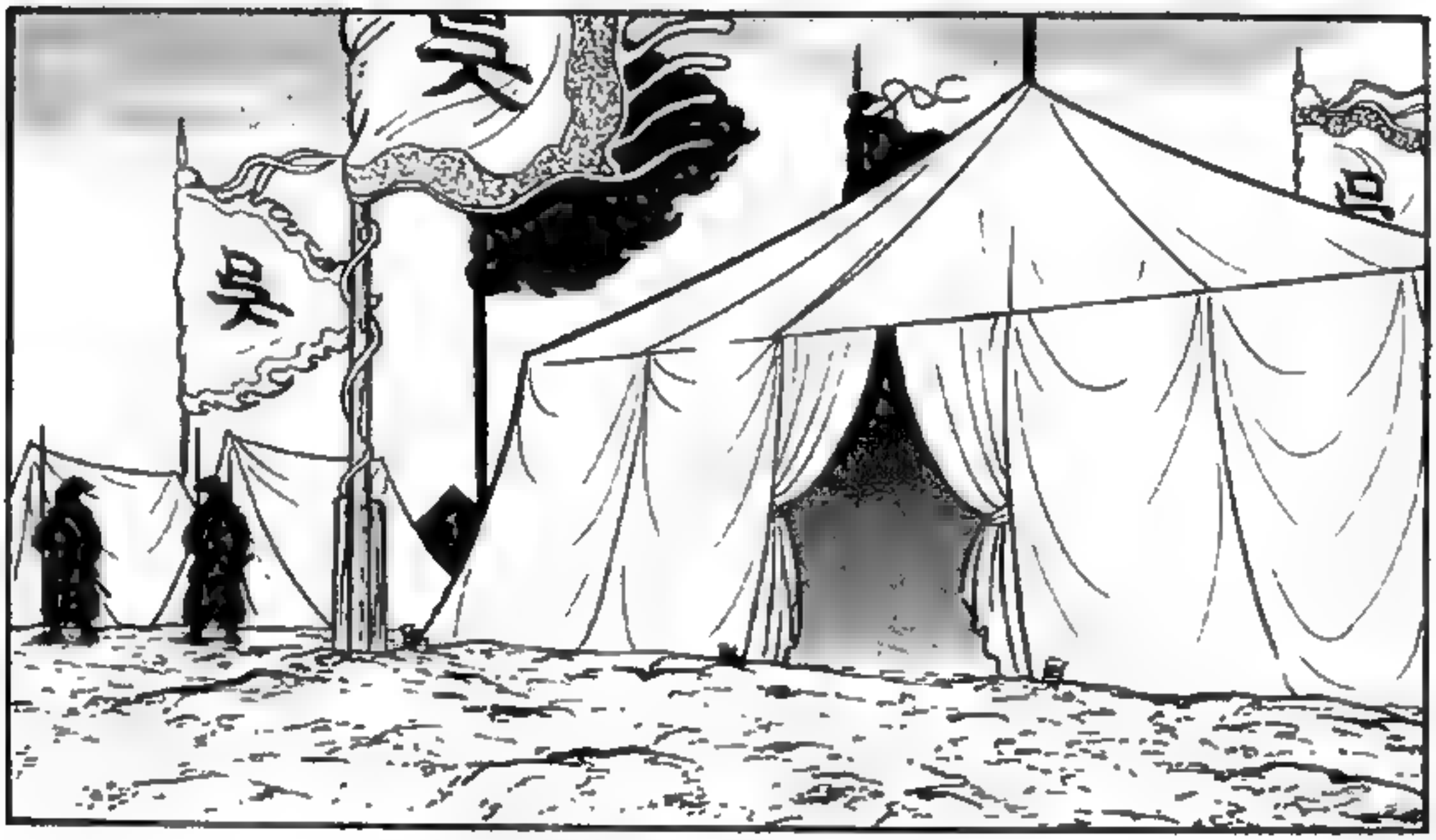



GAHH!


FATHER!
AGHH!

CURSES...

GUAN YU'S END




YES, THEY FELL RIGHT INTO OUR AMBUSH AS PLANNED.
YOU CAPTURED BOTH GUAN YU AND HIS SON ALIVE!?

YES, SIR.

WELL DONE, BRING THEM BEFORE ME.

I HAVE SWORN AN OATH OF BROTHERHOOD WITH THE IMPERIAL UNCLE IN HIS QUEST TO RESTORE THE DYNASTY. I HAVE NO MIND TO ASSOCIATE MYSELF WITH SOMEONE LIKE YOU WHO IS ONLY TOO HAPPY TO MAKE FRIENDS WITH CAO CAO WHENEVER PROFITABLE.

吴

GUAN YU! I HAVE LONG RESPECTED YOU AND THUS ONLY SOUGHT FAMILIAL TIES TO YOU. WHY DID YOU REJECT ALL MY OFFERS?

BUT TO WASTE A WARRIOR OF YOUR STATURE IS THE TRAGEDY OF AN ERA.

NOW THAT I HAVE FALLEN FOR YOUR SCHEMES, ONLY DEATH AWAITS ME.

GUAN YU IS A TRUE HERO OF THESE TIMES. IS THERE NO ONE HERE WHO CAN POSSIBLY DISSUADE HIM FROM DEATH?

MY LORD, A MOMENT, IF YOU WI...

HM...

YOU SHOULD VERY WELL REALIZE THAT PERSUADING GUAN YU IS IMPOSSIBLE. LONG AGO, WHEN CAO CAO WAS HIS HOST, CAO CAO SHOWERED HIS UTMOST AFFECTION AND THE BEST GIFTS MONEY COULD BUY. YET IN THE END, GUAN YU LEFT CAO CAO AS SOON AS HE HEARD LIU BEI WAS ALIVE, KILLING SIX WEI GENERALS ON HIS PATH BACK TO HIS LORD.

MN...

GUAN YU IS THE MAN WHO ANNHILATED WEI'S 7 ELITE DIVISIONS AND SO TERRIFIED CAO CAO INTO EVEN ALMOST RELOCATING HIS CAPITAL. HARBOR HIM ANY LONGER, AND YOU WILL SURELY FIND YOURSELF REPEATING CAO CAO'S MISTAKES.

YES, YOUR WORDS ARE WISE.

IF HE IS NOT PUT TO DEATH HERE AND NOW, HE WILL SURELY WREAK HAVOC ON WU LATER.

MY LORD!

BUT IT'S... SUCH A WASTE OF A MAN...

YES, SIR.

吳

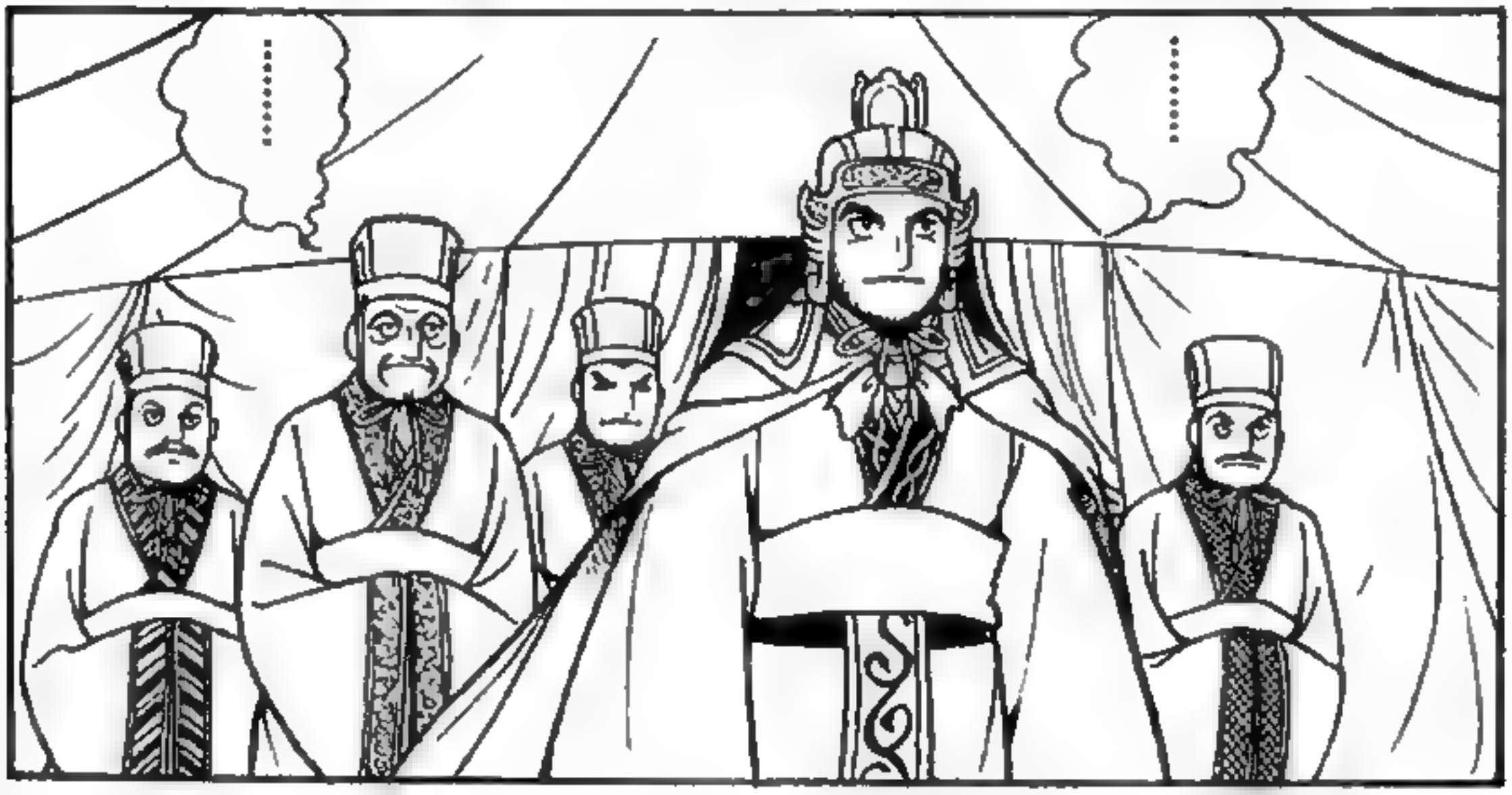
VERY WELL, OFF WITH HIS HEAD!

吳

吳

COME THIS WAY.





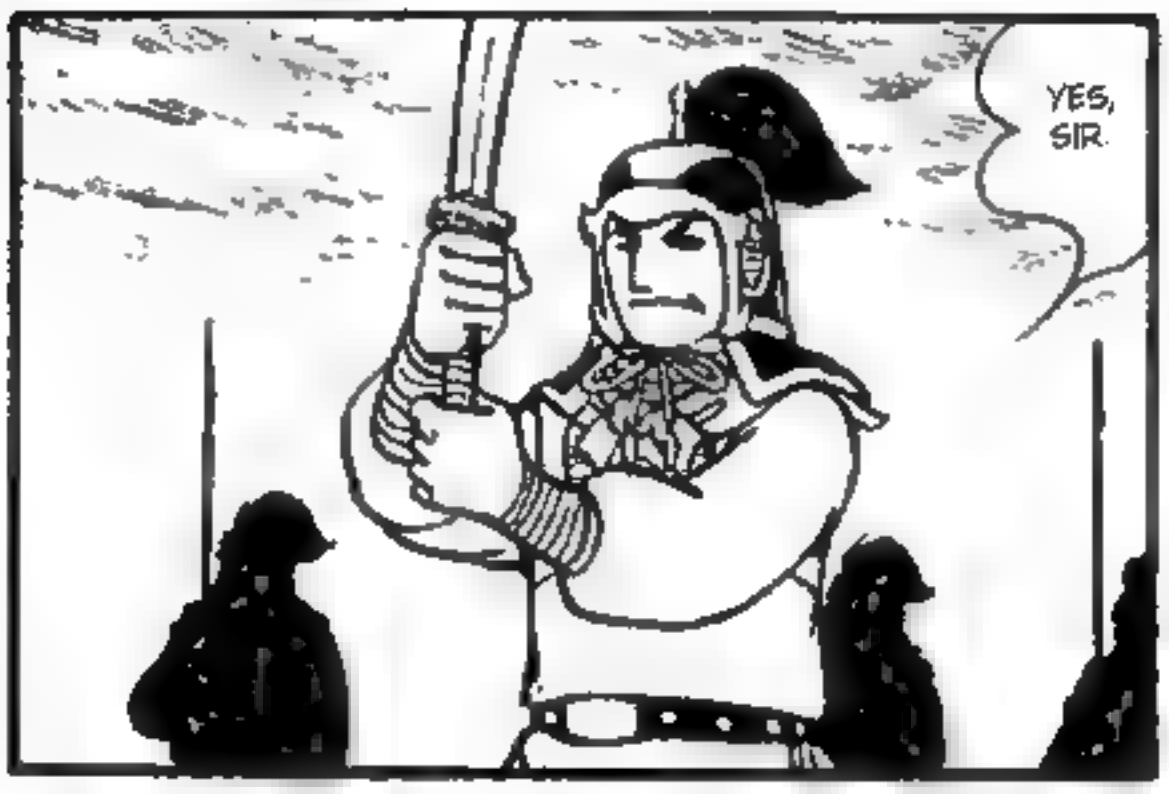
10TH MONTH OF THE 24TH YEAR OF REBUILT TRANQUILITY (219 AD)

WELL DONE, LU MENG. YOU TRULY BESTED ME THIS TIME.

ANY LAST WORDS?

NOW THEN! OFF WITH OUR HEADS, LEST I HAVE MY REVENGE ON WU!

NO WONDER THEY CALL YOU THE TOP GENERAL IN WU!


YES, SIR.


PROCEED.




ゴトッ!!


GUAN YU WAS CLEANLY DECAPI TATED HE WAS 58 YEARS OF AGE.

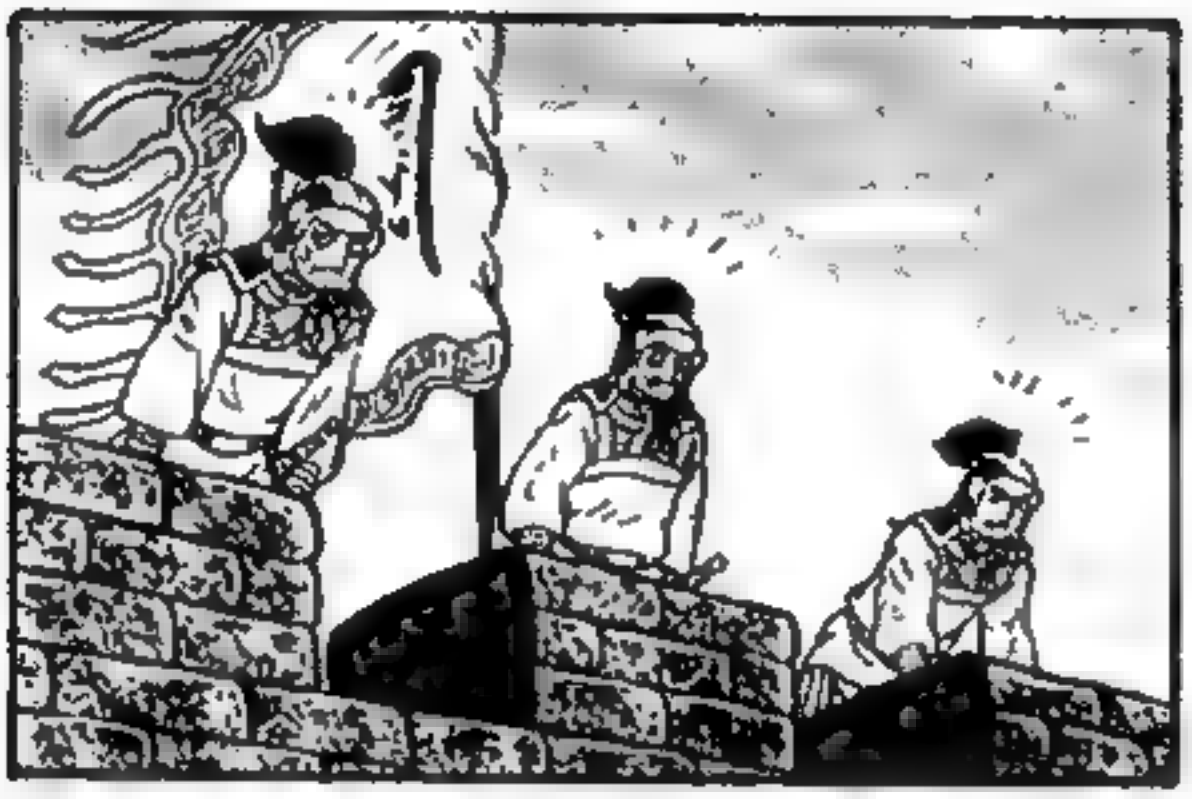



?


DEFENDERS OF MAICHENG! CAN YOU HEAR ME!?

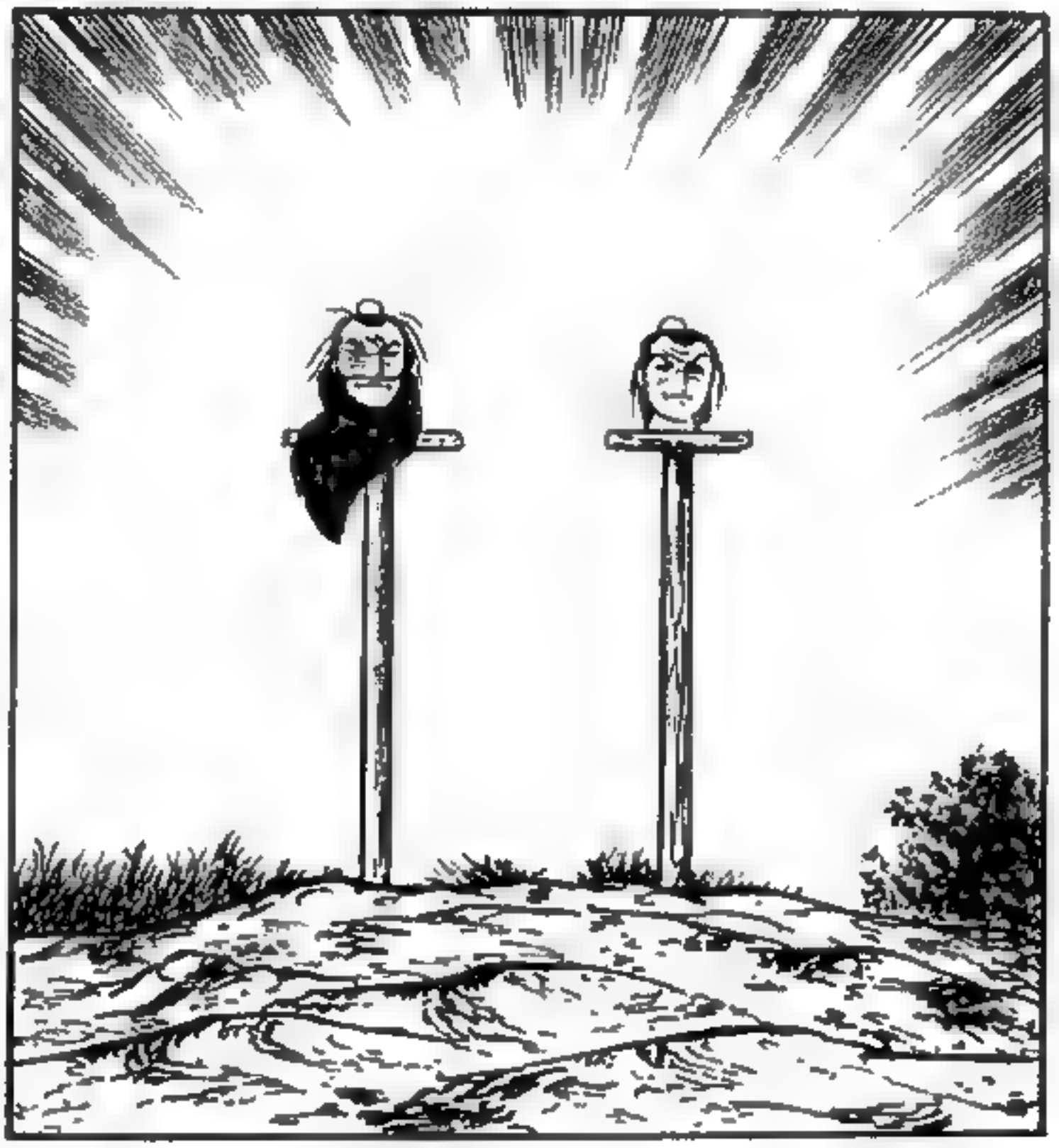

WHAT!
THAT'S PREPOS-TEROUS! OUR INVINCIBLE COM-MANDER COULD NEVER BE KILLED BY THE LIKES OF YOU!


THERE IS NO USE IN WAITING FOR YOUR COM-MANDER. GUAN YU IS DEAD!




SEE FOR YOUR-SELVES!


AH!

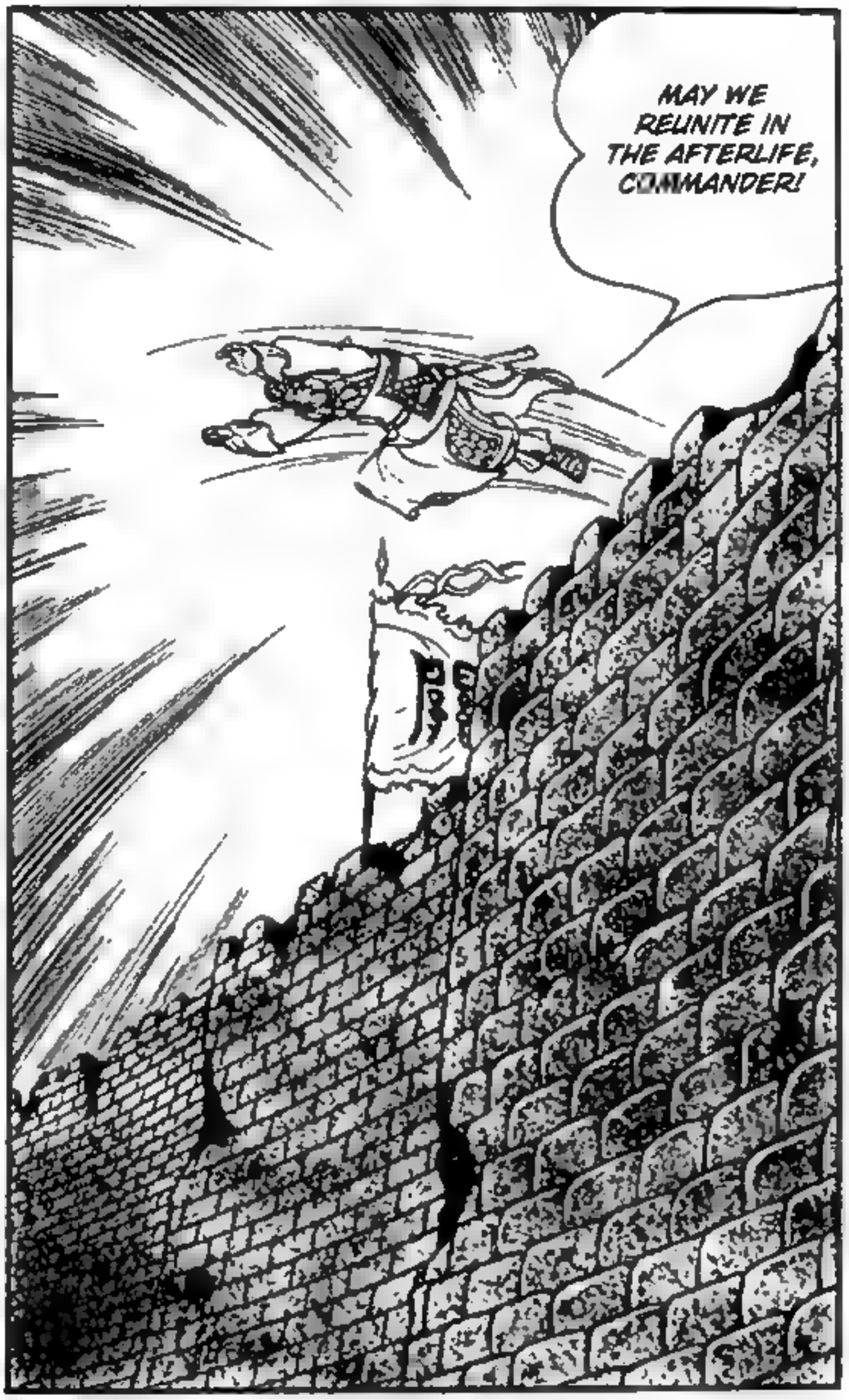



THAT'S GUAN YU AND GUAN PING!


MY FATE IS DECIDED THEN...


GENERAL!



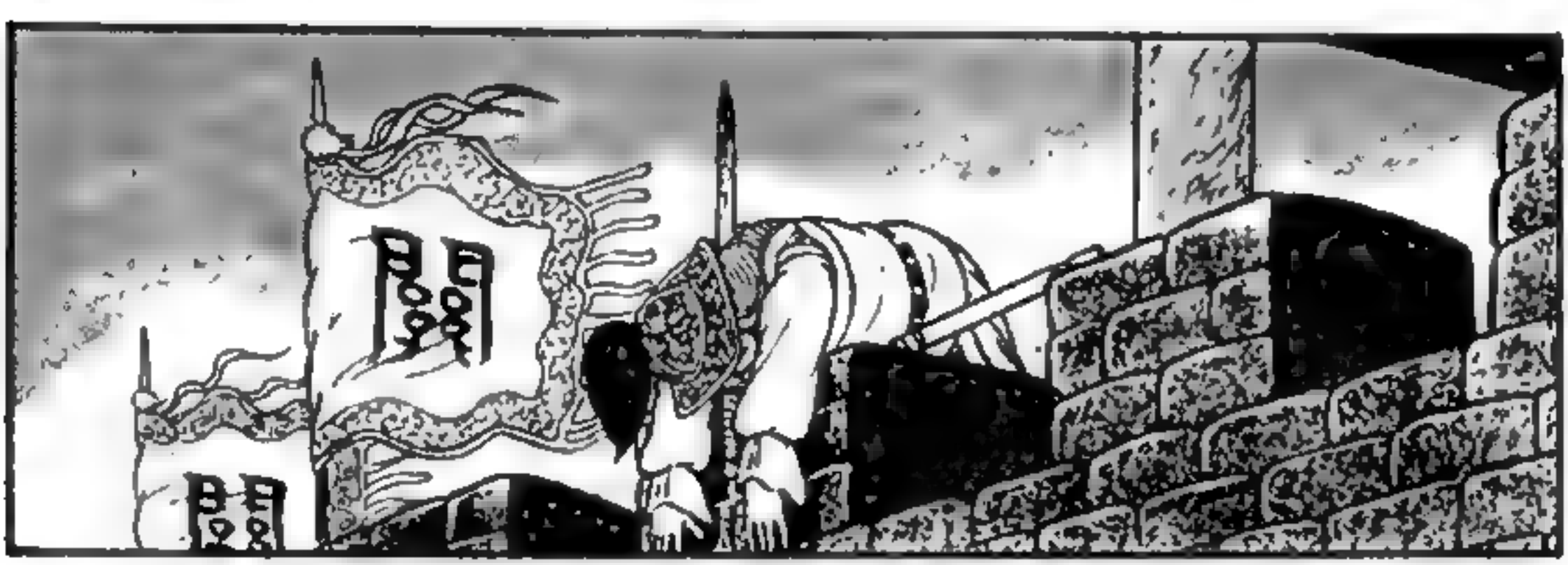

MAY WE REUNITE IN THE AFTERLIFE, COMMANDER!


NO, THERE'S NO REASON FOR ME TO HESITATE...


WANG FU!

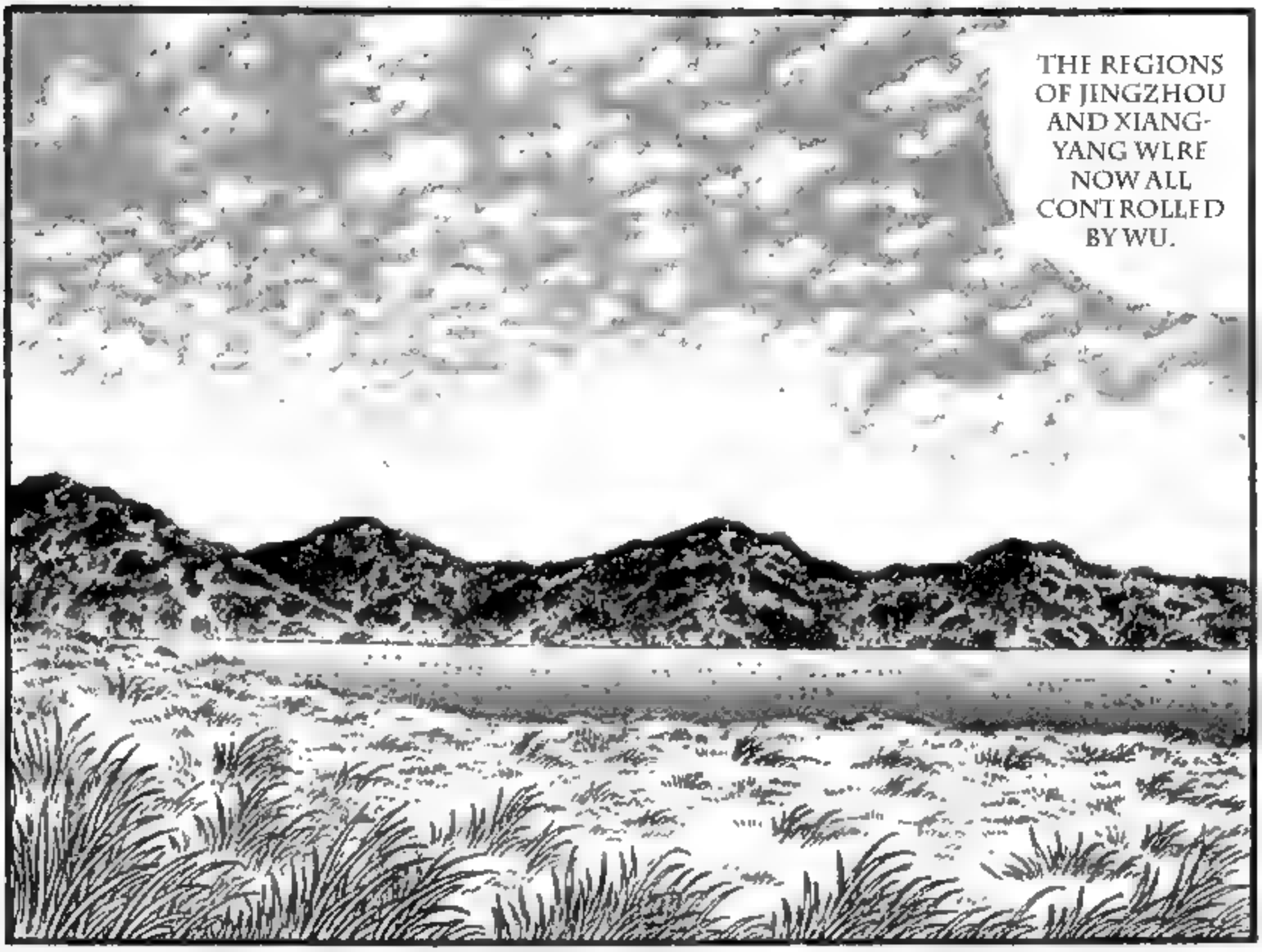



ALLOW ME TO JOIN YOU IN DEATH, COM-MANDER.

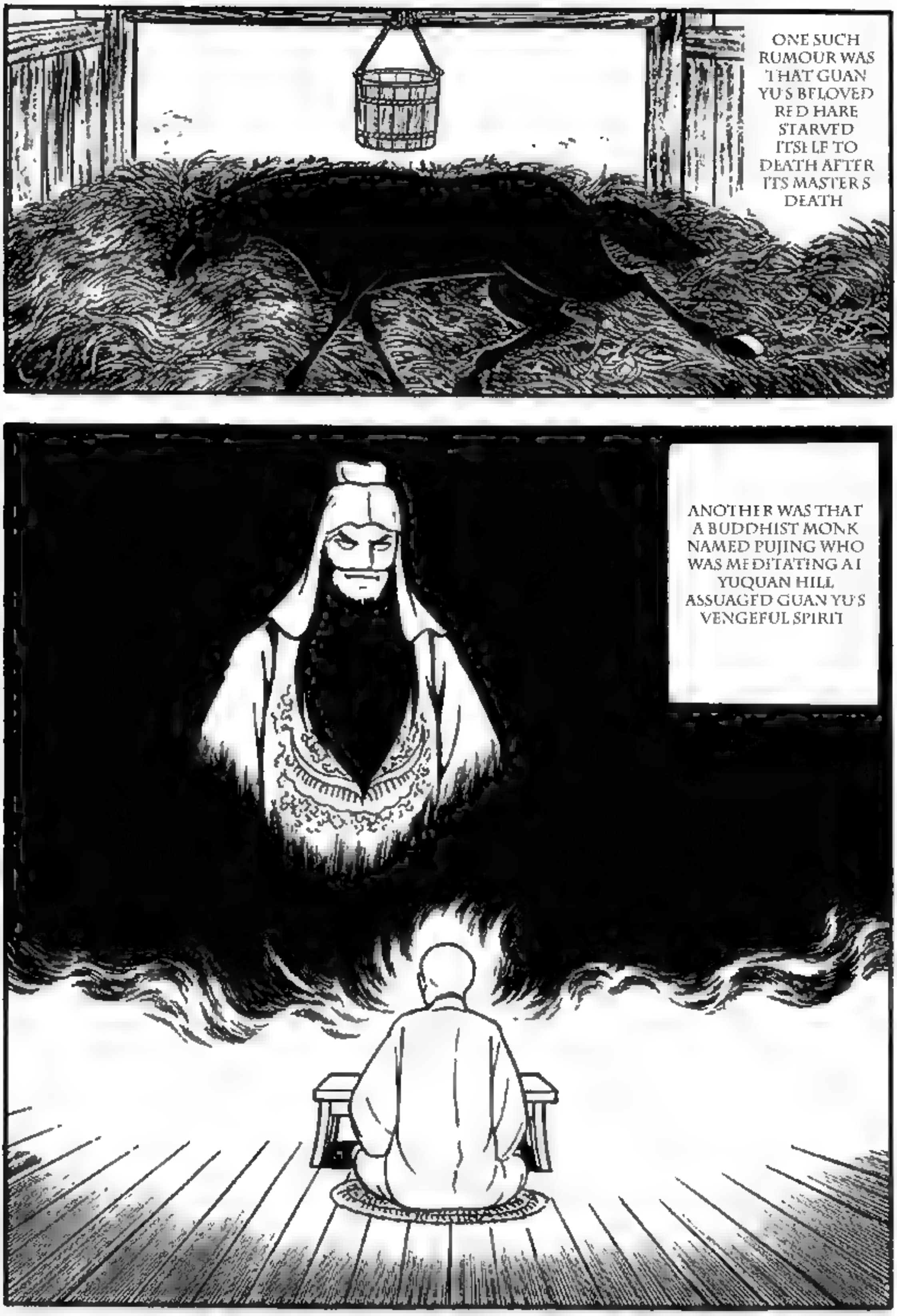



AND WITH THAT MAICHENG FELL TO WU HANDS

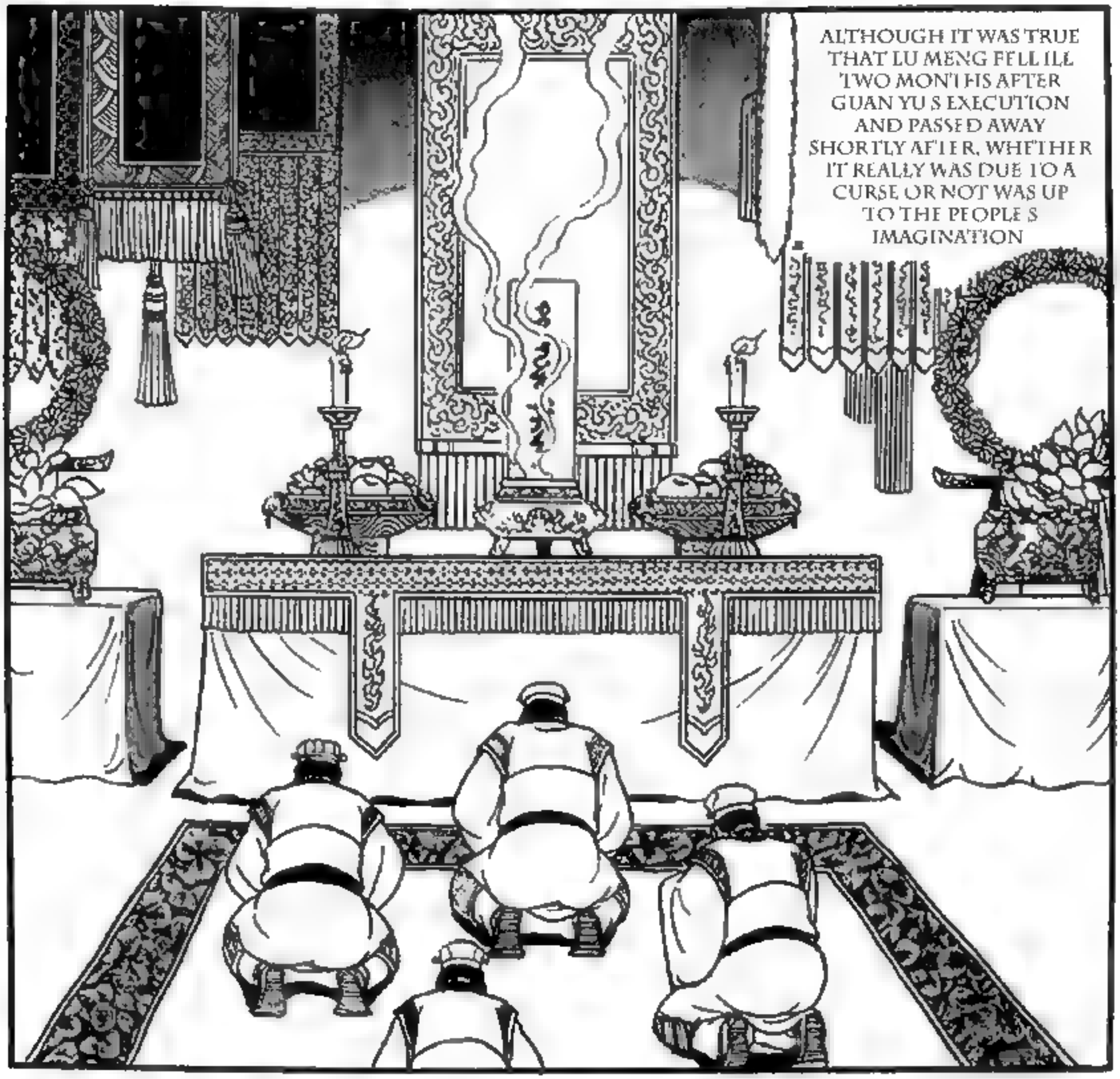
MUCH ADO ABOUT A HEAD



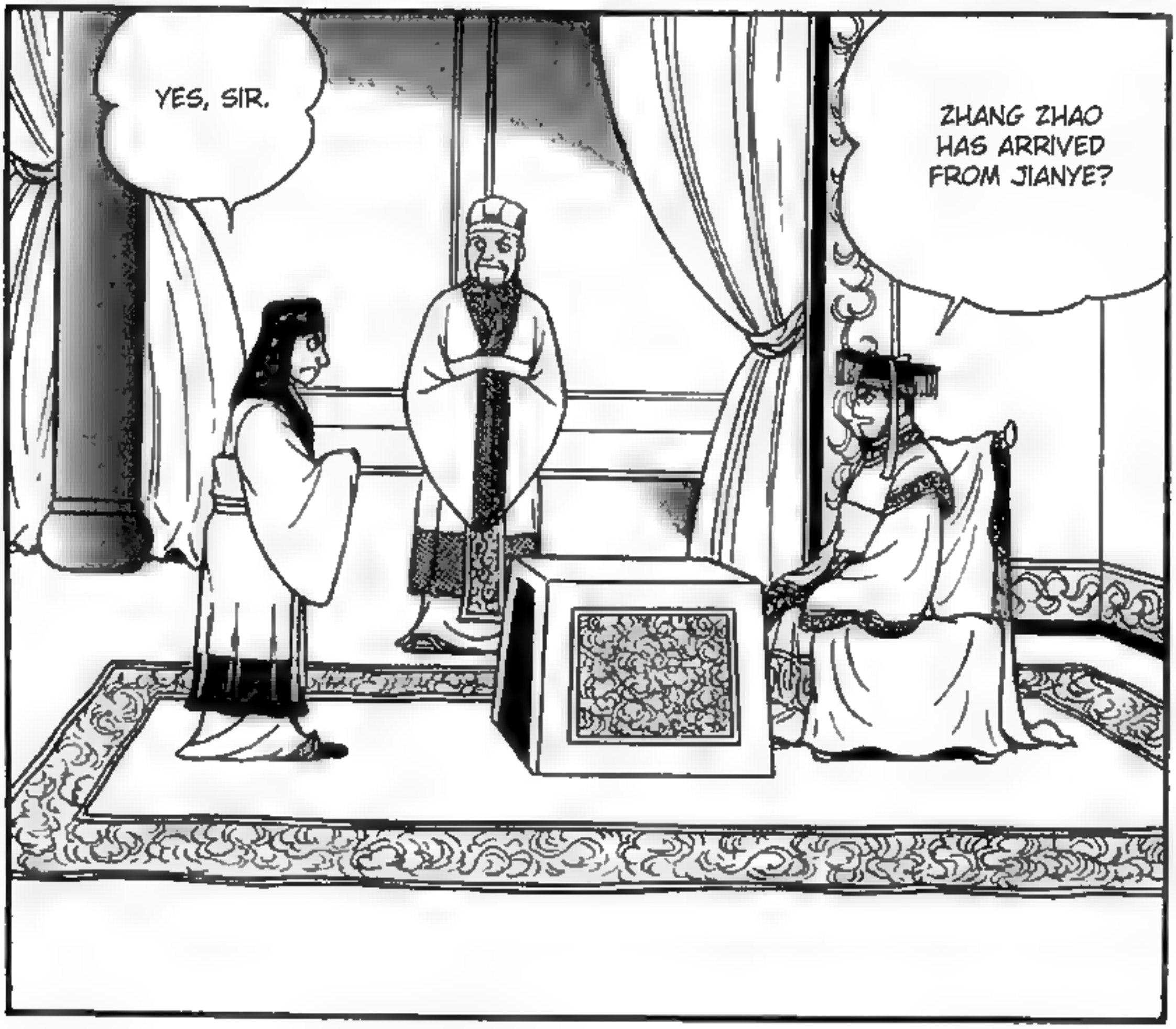



ONE SUCH RUMOUR WAS THAT GUAN YU'S BELOVED RED HARE STARVED ITSELF TO DEATH AFTER ITS MASTER'S DEATH
ANOTHER WAS THAT A BUDDHIST MONK NAMED PUJING WHO WAS MEDITATING AT YUQUAN HILL ASSUAGED GUAN YU'S VENGEFUL SPIRIT


AND THEN THERE WAS GUAN YU'S SUPPOSED CURSE ON LU MENG


ALTHOUGH IT WAS TRUE THAT LU MENG FELL ILL TWO MONTHS AFTER GUAN YU'S EXECUTION AND PASSED AWAY SHORTLY AFTER, WHETHER IT REALLY WAS DUE TO A CURSE OR NOT WAS UP TO THE PEOPLE'S IMAGINATION


JINGZHOU
吳


YES, SIR.
ZHANG ZHAO HAS ARRIVED FROM JIANYE?

YES, SIR.

SEND HIM IN.

MUST BE AN IMPORTANT MATTER FOR HIM TO PERSONALLY COME ALL THIS WAY.

YES, THEY ARE FINALLY IN MY CONTROL AT LAST.

CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR RECENT SUBJUGATION OF JINGZHOU AND XIANGYANG, MY LORD.

I WAS QUITE SHOCKED TO HEAR THAT YOU ORDERED GUAN YU'S EXECUTION.

WHAT BUSINESS IS IMPORTANT ENOUGH TO BRING MY SENIOR STATESMAN ALL THE WAY HERE?

BUT LETTING HIM LIVE IS TO SURELY INVITE A FUTURE DISASTER. HE IS OUR FOE, AFTER ALL.

SHOCKED?

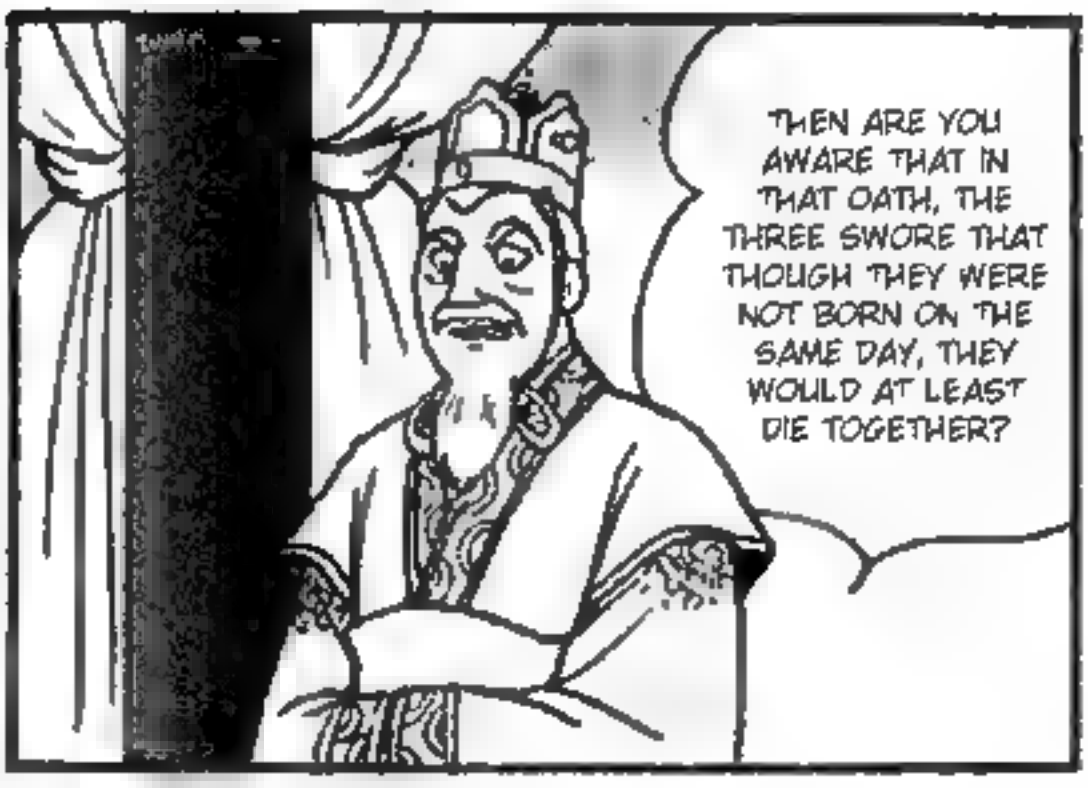
YES, THE WHOLE WORLD KNOWS OF THAT OATH.

LIU BEI, GUAN YU, AND ZHANG FEI HAVE SWORN AN OATH OF BROTHERHOOD IN A PEACH GARDEN LONG AGO.

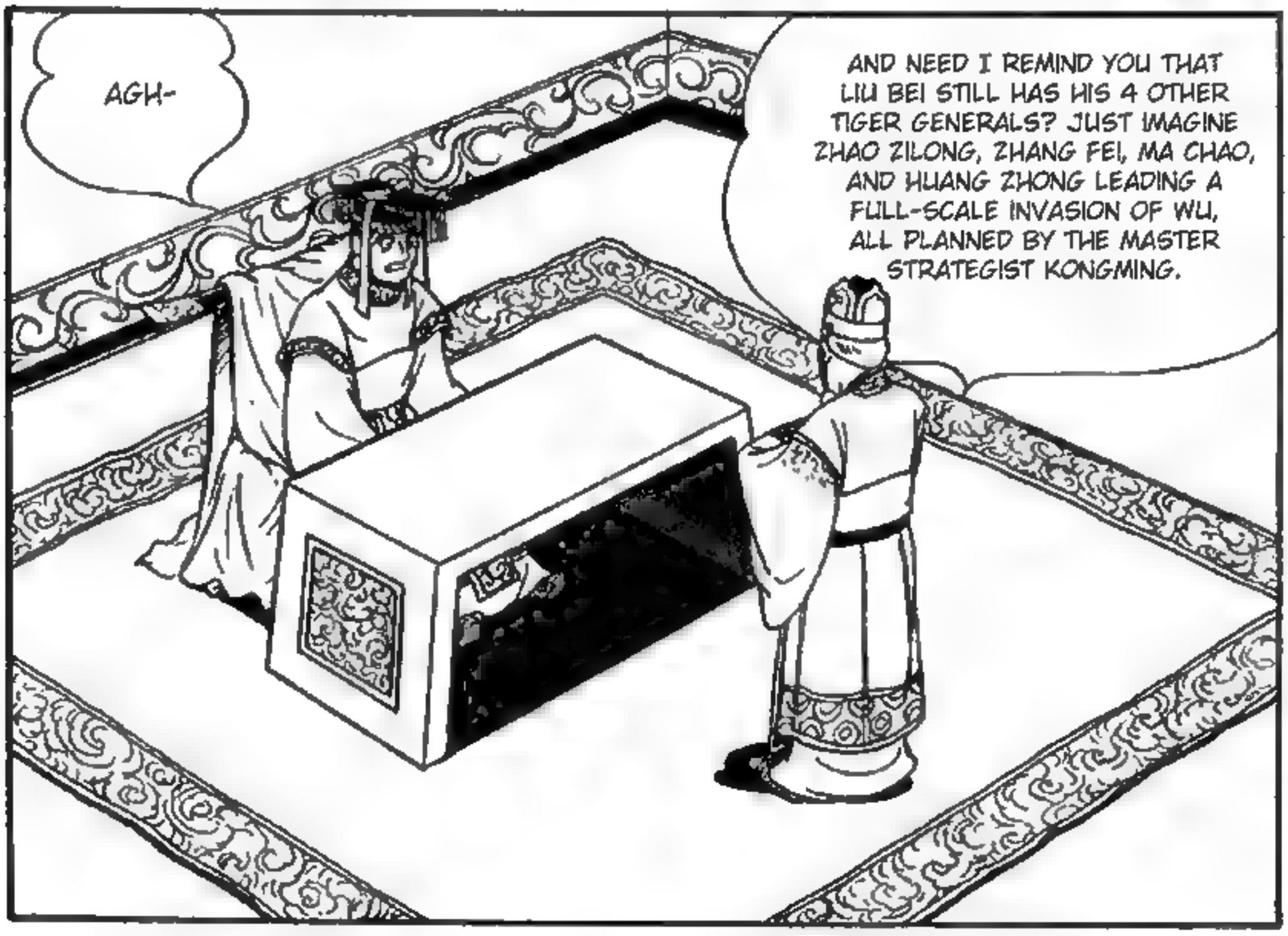
I'M AFRAID YOU HAVE NOT THOUGHT THINGS THROUGH DEEPLY ENOUGH.

NOT DEEPLY ENOUGH?




THEN ARE YOU AWARE THAT IN THAT OATH, THE THREE SWORE THAT THOUGH THEY WERE NOT BORN ON THE SAME DAY, THEY WOULD AT LEAST DIE TOGETHER?


AS SOON AS LIU BEI HEARS GUAN YU HAS DIED, HE AND ZHANG FEI WILL SURELY ATTACK WU WITH FURY.


AGH-
AND NEED I REMIND YOU THAT LIU BEI STILL HAS HIS 4 OTHER TIGER GENERALS? JUST IMAGINE ZHAO ZILONG, ZHANG FEI, MA CHAO, AND HUANG ZHONG LEADING A FULL-SCALE INVASION OF WU, ALL PLANNED BY THE MASTER STRATEGIST KONGMING.

WHO DO YOU THINK WOULD BE MOST PLEASED BY THAT?

NO MATTER THE OUTCOME, A WAR OF SUCH SHEER SCALE WILL LEAVE EVEN THE VICTOR WITH SEVERE LOSSES.

EXACTLY.

CAO CAO...

I ADMIT I WAS RASH IN ORDERING GUAN YU'S EXECUTION.

MNN... YES, IT'S EXACTLY AS YOU FEAR.

CAO CAO WILL ATTACK THE BATTERED VICTOR AND CLAIM THE WHOLE REALM AS HIS PRIZE.

I PROPOSE YOU SEND GUAN YU'S HEAD TO CAO CAO.

WE CANNOT RISK A FULL-SCALE WAR WITH SHU. WHAT CAN WE DO TO AVOID IT, ZHANG ZHAO?

SHU'S FURY WOULD THEN BE DIRECTED AT WEI.

WE WOULD MAKE IT CLEAR THAT IT WAS CAO CAO'S DOING ALL ALONG.

IT WAS, AFTER ALL, CAO CAO WHO ORIGINALLY ASKED US TO ATTACK GUAN YU. THUS, BY SENDING THE HEAD TO HIM...

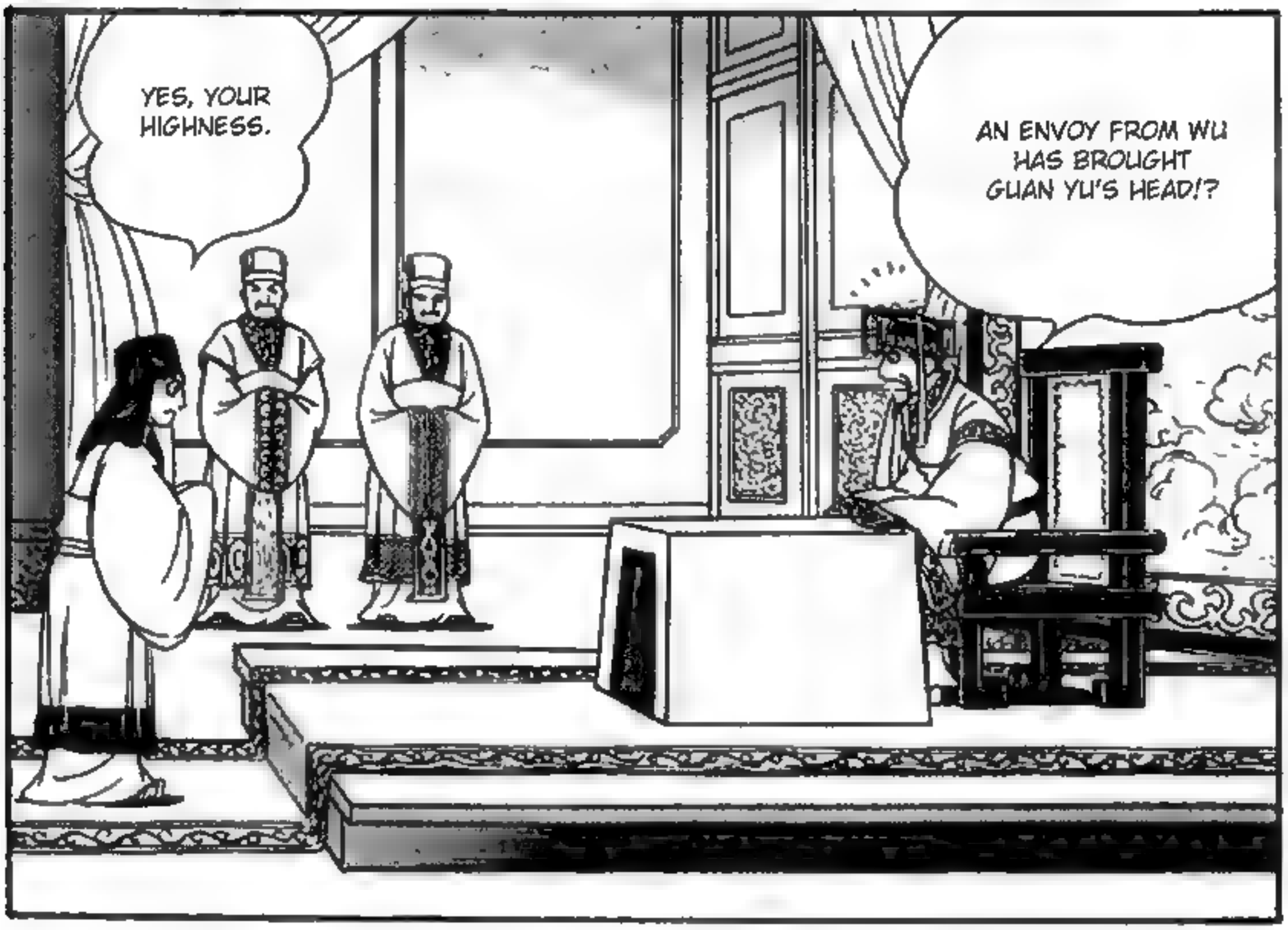
AH YES!

THEN WE CAN BE THE ONES SITTING BACK AND WAITING FOR THE OPPORTUNE MOMENT TO STRIKE.

YES, MY LORD.

SALT THE HEAD AND SEND IT TO CAO CAO IMMEDIATELY!


AT THIS TIME, CAO CAO HAD RETURNED TO LUOYANG WITH HIS ARMY.


YES, YOUR HIGHNESS.
AN ENVOY FROM WU HAS BROUGHT GUAN YU'S HEAD!?

AS YOU WISH, SIR.

BRING IT HERE.

YES.

SHOW ME.

BUT AT LEAST, I CAN NOW REST EASY WITH HIM GONE!

MN... HE TRULY WAS A FEARSOME WARRIOR. A REAL PITY THAT HE WAS EXECUTED.

AND WHY IS THAT, SIMA YI?

YOUR HIGHNESS, NOW IS NOT THE TIME FOR CELEBRATIONS NOR REST.

WHY ELSE WOULD SUN QUAN SEND THIS HEAD, IF NOT TO BLAME YOU AS THE MASTERMIND BEHIND GUAN YU'S DEATH, THEREBY DIVERTING LIU BEI'S FURY ONTO WEI INSTEAD OF WU?

A TRAP? HOW?

BECAUSE THIS HEAD IS CLEARLY A TRAP FROM WU.

GUAN YU ALONE DESTROYED 7 OF OUR ELITE DIVISIONS, THROWING US INTO PANIC. YOUR HIGHNESS CAME CLOSE TO EVEN RELOCATING THE CAPITAL BACK THEN.

AGHH-

NOW THINK OF THE LOSSES INFLICTED BY A FULL-SCALE WAR LED BY MEN SUCH AS KONGMING, ZHANG FEI, ZHAO ZILONG, MA CHAO, AND HUANG ZHONG.

SEND THIS HEAD BACK TO WU AT ONCE!

YOU'RE ABSOLUTELY RIGHT, SIMA YI! FOR A MOMENT THERE, I ALMOST FELL FOR WU'S NEFARIOUS TRAP.

GIVE GUAN YU A LAVISH FUNERAL TO NOT ONLY TURN AWAY SHU'S FURY BUT ALSO LEAVE LIU BEI IN OUR DEBT.

WELL, WHAT IS IT YOU WANT ME TO DO WITH IT THEN?

WAIT JUST A MOMENT. SIMPLY SENDING THE HEAD BACK LIKE A NUISANCE MAY CAUSE SOME TO SAY YOUR HIGHNESS LACKS BENEVOLENCE.

YES, I WILL GIVE GUAN YU A FUNERAL WORTHY OF A STATE MINISTER. IN FACT, I WILL EVEN NAME HIM THE PRINCE OF JINGZHOU.

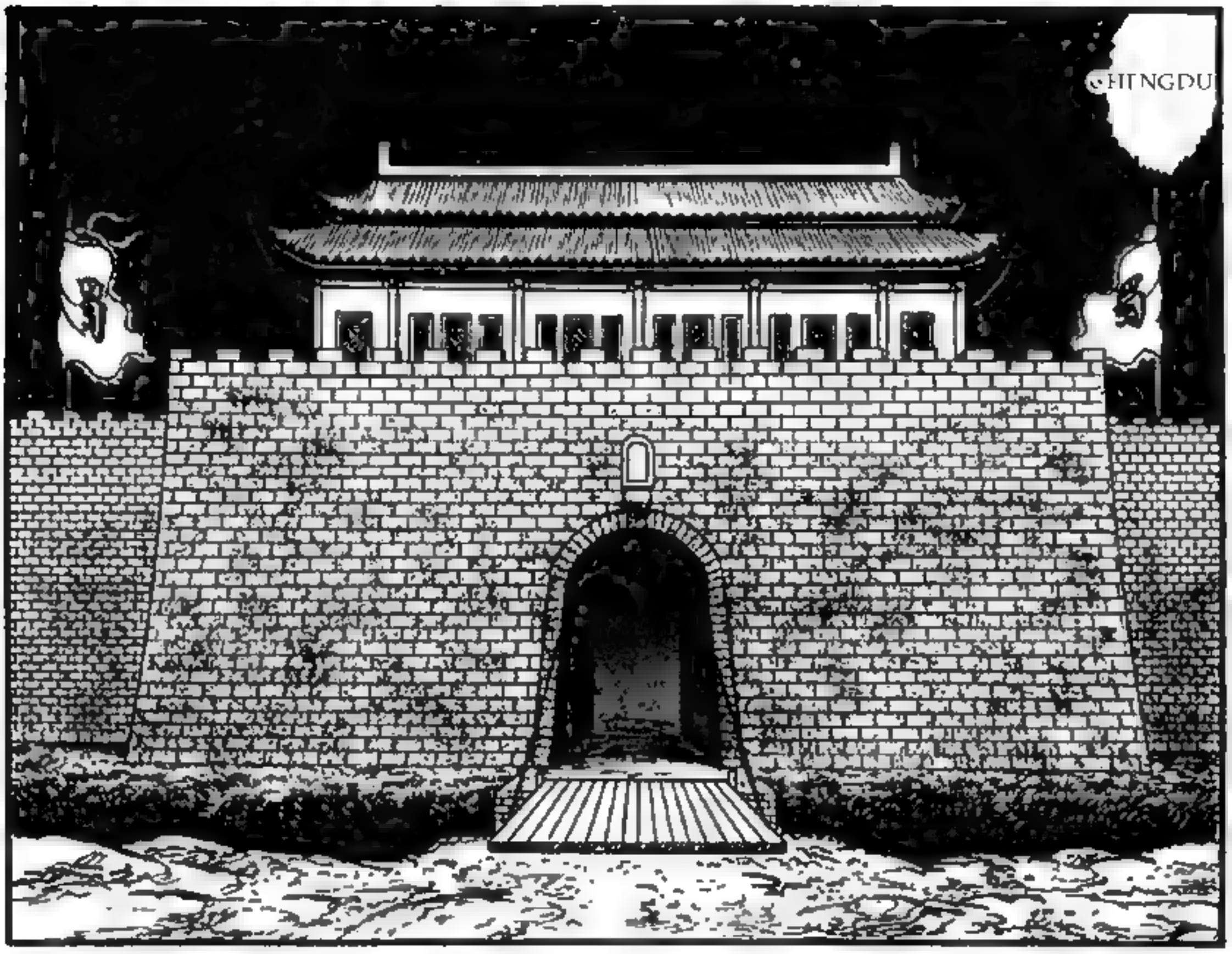
BRILLIANT IDEA, SIMA YI!

YES, YOUR HIGHNESS.

MAKE THE PREPARATIONS FOR THE FUNERAL RIGHT AWAY. ALL FESTIVITIES ARE FORBIDDEN IN THE CAPITAL FOR THE 100 DAYS OF MOURNING. TREAT GUAN YU'S CORPSE LIKE AN IMPERIAL SCION AND HAVE EVERY OFFICIAL NO MATTER HIS RANK COME TO PAY THEIR RESPECTS.

EVEN WHEN DEAD, THE GREAT GUAN YU STILL MANAGES TO MAKE WEI AND WU TREMBLE...

SHU'S ANGUISH







HM?

BAD NEWS WILL ARRIVE SOON...

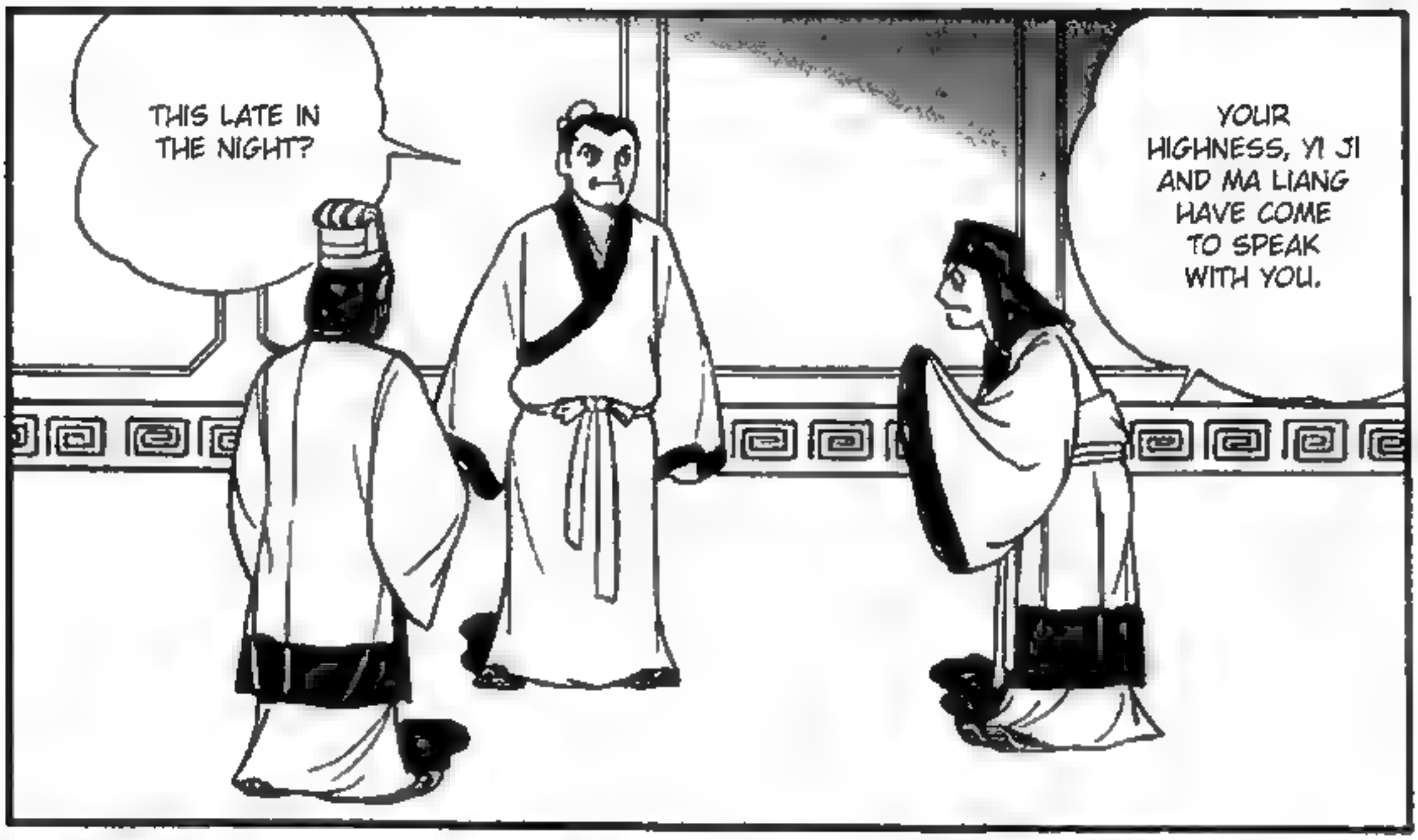
I JUST HAD AN EERIE DREAM IN WHICH GUAN YU WAS STANDING SILENTLY AT MY BEDSIDE.

KONGMING.

WHAT IS THE MATTER, YOUR HIGHNESS?


I ONLY HOPE SO TOO...


I'M SURE YOU'RE JUST IMAGINING THINGS.
YOU DON'T THINK SOMETHING HAPPENED TO GUAN YU, DO YOU?


THIS LATE IN THE NIGHT?
YOUR HIGHNESS, YI JI AND MA LIANG HAVE COME TO SPEAK WITH YOU.




AS YOU WISH.
PERHAPS MY DREAM PORTENDS MORE. LET THEM IN.

WELL...

MA LIANG. YI JI. WHAT BRINGS YOU HERE AT THIS HOUR?

THIS IS AN EMERGENCY. WE MUST SEND AN ARMY AT ONCE.

JINGZHOU HAS FALLEN TO WU!?

WE REGRETFULLY INFORM YOU THAT WHILE GUAN YU WAS BESIEGING FANCHENG, JINGZHOU HAS FALLEN TO WU. GUAN YU HAS REQUESTED IMMEDIATE REINFORCEMENTS.

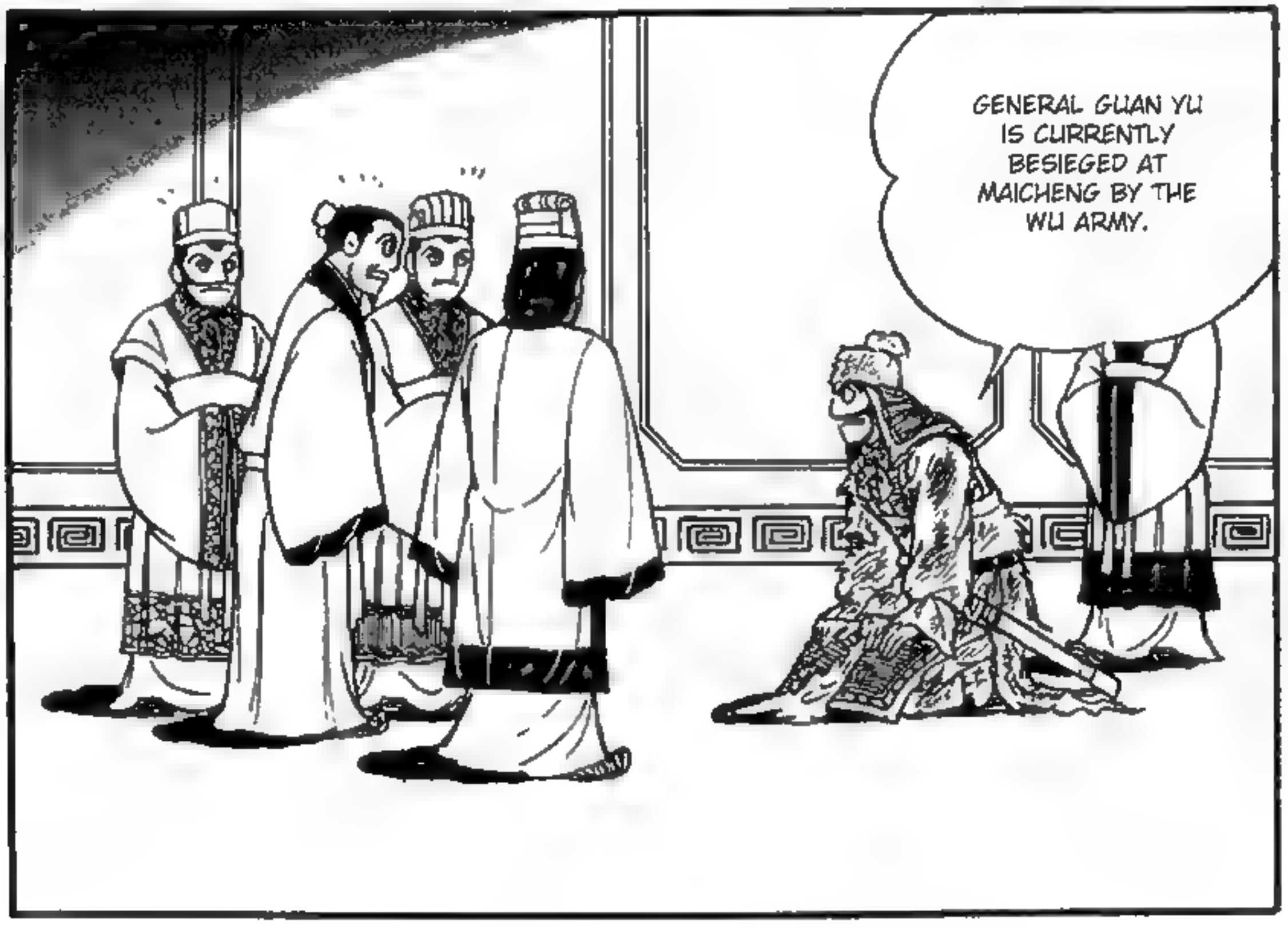
LET HIM IN AT ONCE!

YOUR HIGHNESS! LIAO HUA HAS ARRIVED FROM MAICHENG WITH A MESSAGE.



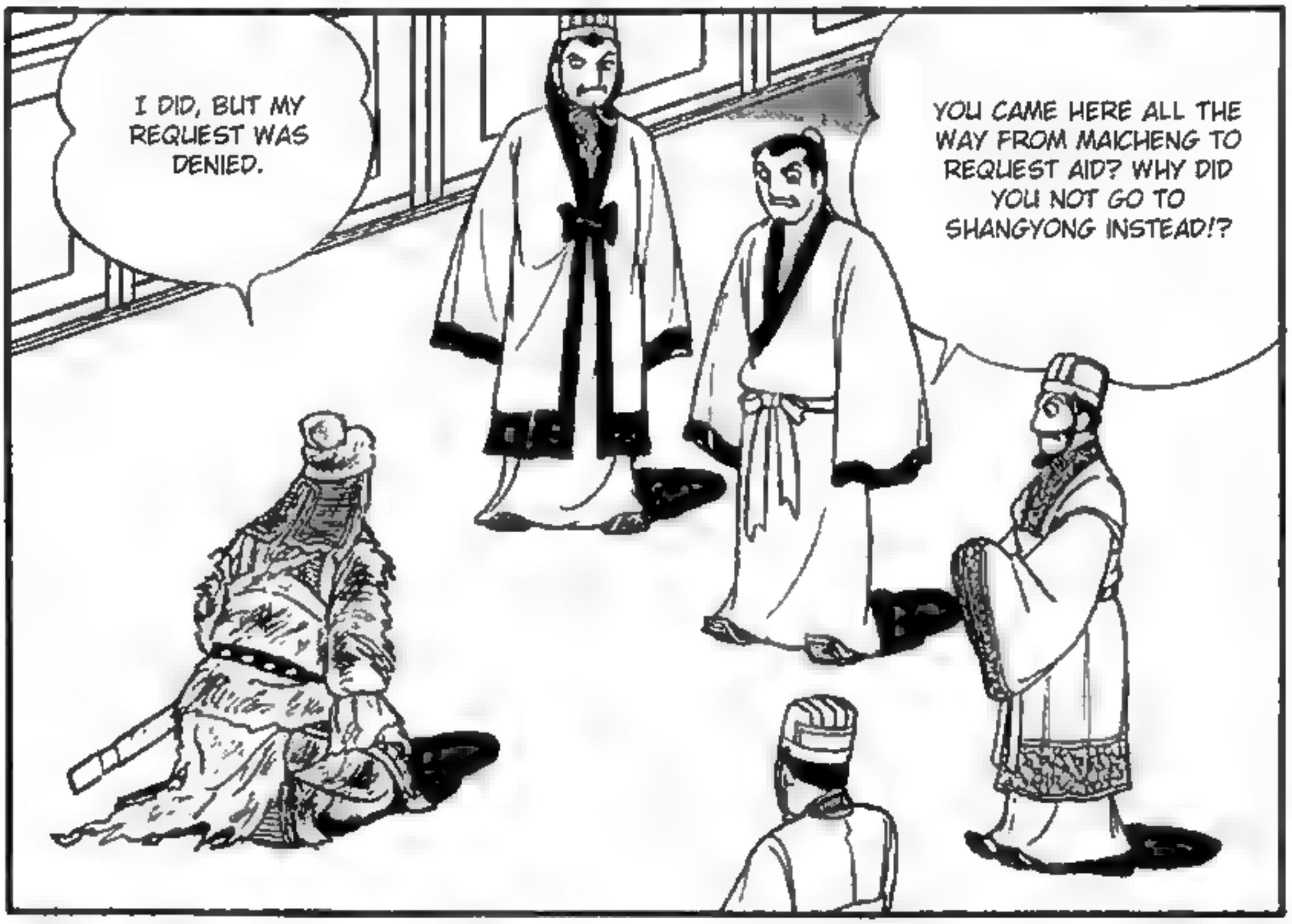





GENERAL GUAN YU IS CURRENTLY BESIEGED AT MAICHENG BY THE WU ARMY.




HE IS TRYING HIS BEST TO HOLD OFF THE ENEMIES WITH BARELY 500 SOLDIERS AND LOW FOOD SUPPLIES. MAICHENG IS ON THE BRINK OF FALLING!


I DID, BUT MY REQUEST WAS DENIED.
YOU CAME HERE ALL THE WAY FROM MAICHENG TO REQUEST AID? WHY DID YOU NOT GO TO SHANGYONG INSTEAD!?


WHAT!?


LIU FENG AND MENG DA TOLD ME THEY HAD TOO FEW SOLDIERS TO DO ANYTHING, AND THAT I SHOULD THUS RIDE TO CHENGDU INSTEAD.

Y-YES...

LIU FENG AND MENG DA REFUSED TO SEND REINFORCE-MENTS!?

I WILL SET OUT WITH AN ARMY FIRST THING TOMORROW. SHOULD ANYTHING HAPPEN TO GUAN YU, I WOULD NOT KNOW WHAT TO DO WITH MYSELF.

I CAN HARDLY BELIEVE WHAT I'M HEARING... EVEN IF THEY COULD ONLY SPARE A FEW THOUSAND, GUAN YU'S A MAN WHO COULD AT LEAST MANAGE TO PREVENT THE WORST WITH THAT SMALL FORCE. LIU FENG AND MENG DA'S CONDUCT IS ABSOLUTELY UNACCEPTABLE!

AH, THAT IS IMMENSELY REASSURING, KONGMING.

LEAVE THE MATTER TO ME, YOUR HIGHNESS. I WILL COMMAND THE RELIEF FORCE.

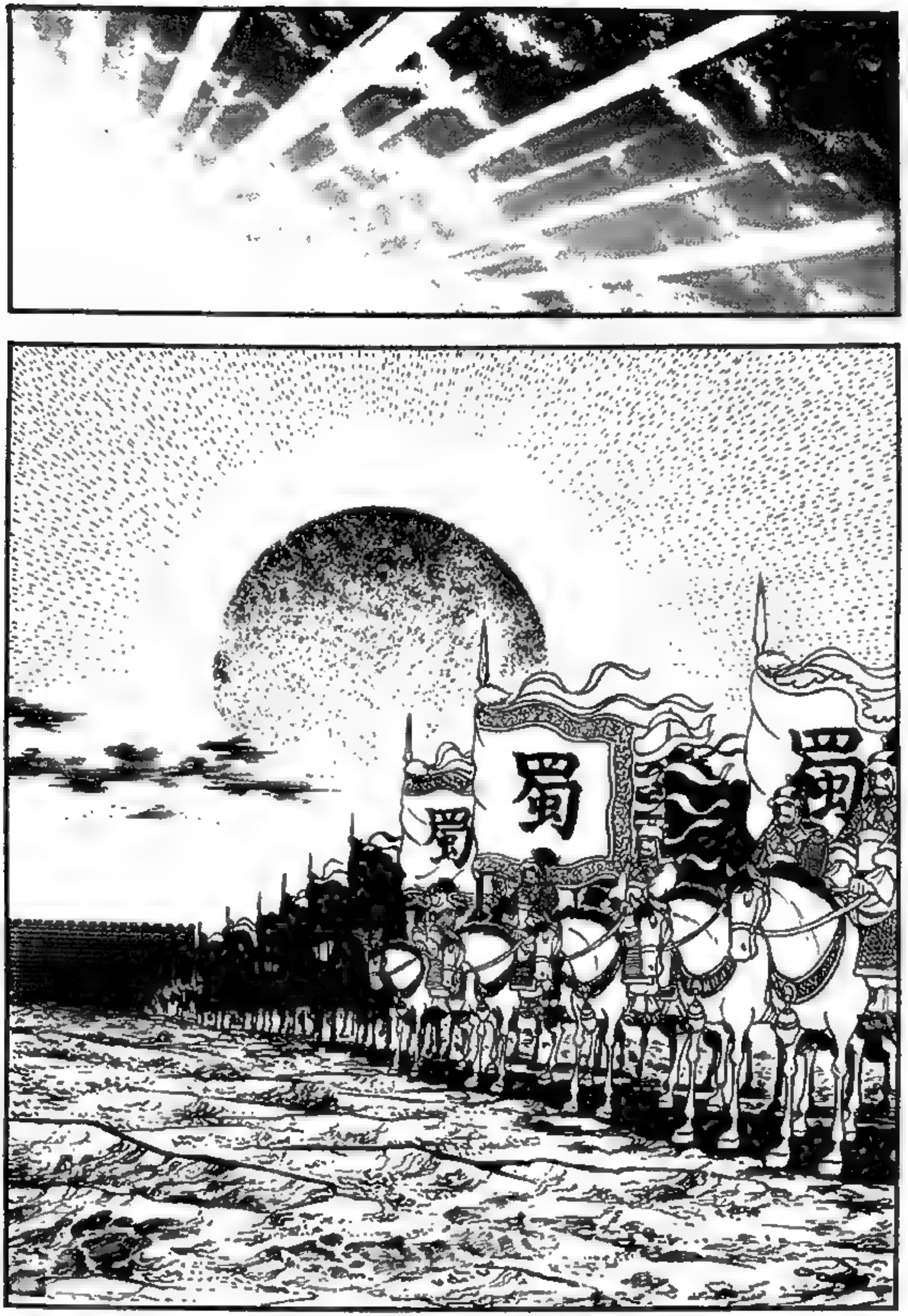
YES, SIR.

INFORM ZHANG FEI RIGHT AWAY.

YES.

TELL ALL THE OTHER OFFICERS TO PREPARE TO MOVE OUT AT ONCE.

THE NIGHT IN CHENGDU BUSTLED INTO MOTION


蜀
蜀

WE JUST RECEIVED ANOTHER MESSAGE

I MUST HURRY TO MY BROTHER'S AID.

WHAT!?

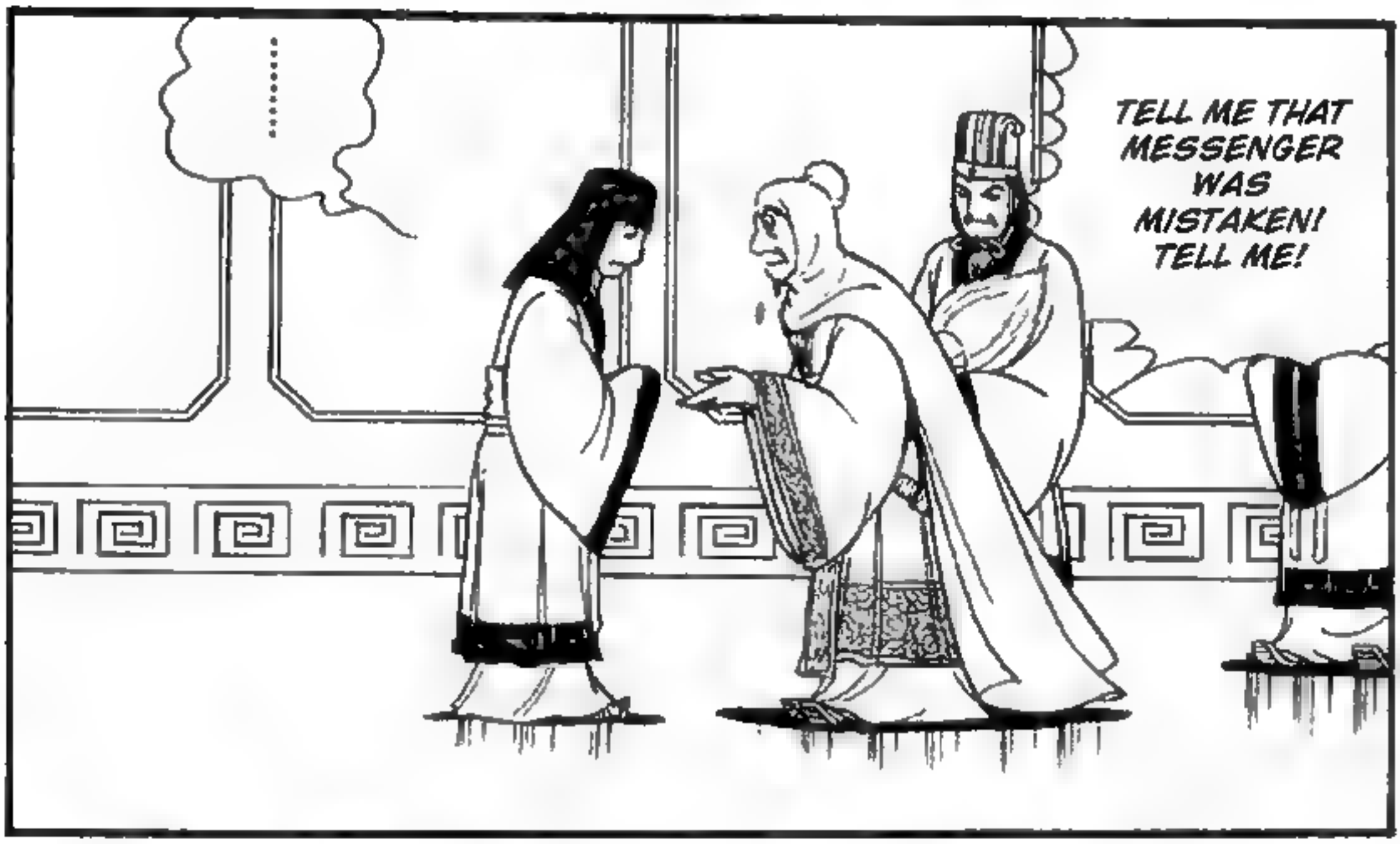
GUAN YU WAS CAPTURED BY WU FORCES AND SUMMARILY BEHEADED.

I'M AFRAID THE MESSENGER WAS QUITE INSISTENT ON THIS POINT.

YOU MUST BE MISTAKEN!

B-B-B... BEHEADED!?


HE'S LYING! THAT SIMPLY CANNOT BE!


.....
TELL ME THAT MESSENGER WAS MISTAKEN! TELL ME!


IT'S A LIE... I REFUSE TO BELIEVE IT...

I WILL NOT BELIEVE IT! I REFUSE!

I REFUSE...

.....

.....

PLEASE COLLECT YOURSELF, YOUR HIGHNESS.

YES, SIR.

PLEASE ESCORT HIS HIGHNESS TO HIS PRIVATE CHAMBERS.

FOR 3 DAYS AFTER, LIU BEI REFUSED TO TOUCH ANY FOOD AND SIMPLY LIED IN BED

HE KEEPS REPEATING THAT HE SWORE TO DIE TOGETHER WITH HIS BROTHERS SO IT WOULD NOT BE RIGHT TO LIVE ON AND ENJOY THE LUXURIES OF LIFE.

HE REFUSED TO TOUCH BREAKFAST AGAIN.

IS HE STILL GRIEVING?

I SHALL TRY TO CONSOLE HIM.

I SEE...

I CANNOT FIND MY APPETITE WITH GUAN YU'S DEATH ON MY MIND.

KONGMING?

I HEARD YOUR HIGHNESS REFUSED TO TOUCH BREAK-FAST AGAIN.

PARDON MY REMARK, BUT YOUR GRIEF IS BECOMING MORE EFFEM-INATE THAN WHAT IS DEEMED PROPER.

IF YOU CONTINUE TO GRIEVE SO MISERABLY, JUST WHO WILL AVENGE GUAN YU'S DEATH?

LIFE AND DEATH ARE FIXED BY THE HEAVENS. THEY ARE NOT THINGS WE MORTALS CAN CHANGE.

THEN YOU MUST CEASE TO RUIN YOUR HEALTH ANY FURTHER!

NO, I STILL FULLY INTEND TO AVENGE GUAN YU'S DEATH.

WE ARE STILL RECEIVING MANY NEW REPORTS THAT REQUIRE YOUR ATTENTION, BUT SINCE YOUR HIGHNESS REFUSES TO LEAVE BED, THE OFFICIALS ARE AT A LOSS WHAT TO DO.

WHAT'S THE MEANING OF THIS?

FOR INSTANCE, WU HAS SENT GUAN YU'S HEAD TO WEI, WHERE IT WAS GIVEN A FUNERAL WORTHY OF AN IMPERIAL RELATIVE.

SUN QUAN WAS LIKELY TRYING TO DIVERT OUR WRATH ONTO WEI INSTEAD.

I SWEAR I WILL NOT LIVE UNDER THE SAME HEAVENS AS SUN QUAN!

DOES HE SERIOUSLY THINK I WOULD FALL FOR SUCH A PLOY!?

I'M AFRAID NOT, SIR.

YOU'RE RIGHT. NOW IS NOT THE TIME TO LIE HERE GRIEVING. WE MUST MOBILIZE AT ONCE!

IF GUAN YU WERE STILL ALIVE, I WOULD OF COURSE RUSH TO HIS AID EVEN A SECOND SOONER, BUT THE SITUATION IS DIFFERENT NOW. IT REQUIRES US TO PRUDENTLY SIT BACK AND MAKE A CAREFULLY CALCULATED ACTION.

WHAT!

BOTH WEI AND WU ARE HOPING THAT WE WILL GET INTO A COSTLY WAR WITH THE OTHER. WE MUST NOT RUSH INTO ACTION.

WE MUST SEED SOME SORT OF CONFLICT BETWEEN WEI AND WU, SO THAT THEY ARE COMPELLED INTO CONFLICT AGAINST EACH OTHER. ONLY THEN, CAN WE STRIKE

THEN WHAT SHOULD I DO?

AS ALWAYS, YOU'RE RIGHT. AS THE KING OF HANZHONG NOW, I CANNOT MAKE ANY CARELESS ACTIONS.

HMM...

YOUR SUBJECTS WILL BE RELIEVED AT LAST TO SEE YOU UP AND ABOUT.

THANK YOU FOR PUTTING ME BACK IN MY SENSES.

AND WHAT WOULD THAT BE?

BUT THERE'S STILL ONE THING THAT WEIGHS HEAVILY ON MY CHEST...

YES...

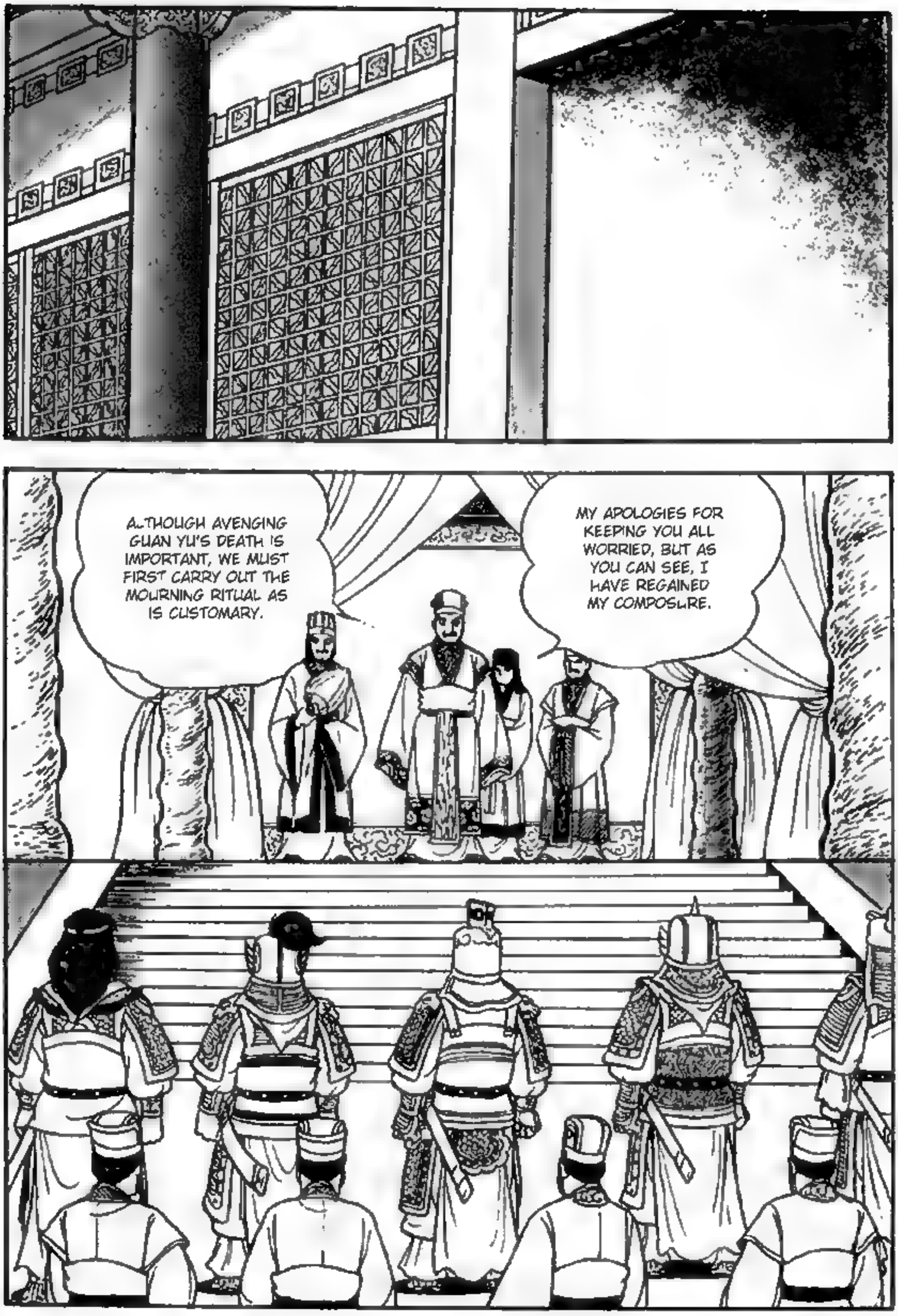
IT'S THE MATTER OF LIU FENG AND MENG DA, WHO REFUSED TO AID GUAN YU. IF I DO NOT PUNISH THEM ACCORDINGLY, THE OTHER OFFICERS WILL SURELY THINK I AM GIVING BIASED TREATMENT BECAUSE HE IS MY SON.

YES.

SIMPLY GETTING UP AND SHOWING THE MEN YOU ARE FINE WILL SUFFICE FOR NOW.

RIGHT.

BUT WE MUST NOT BE TOO QUICK TO HAND OUT PUNISHMENTS. IF THEY WERE TO THINK THEY MAY BE EXECUTED, THEN THERE'S A CHANCE OF A REBELLION.


ALTHOUGH AVENGING GUAN YU'S DEATH IS IMPORTANT, WE MUST FIRST CARRY OUT THE MOURNING RITUAL AS IS CUSTOMARY.
MY APOLOGIES FOR KEEPING YOU ALL WORRIED, BUT AS YOU CAN SEE, I HAVE REGAINED MY COMPOSURE.

YES, YOUR HIGHNESS.

A FUNERARY ALTAR IS TO BE BUILT AT THE SOUTHERN GATES TO SUMMON HIS SPIRIT HOME.

BROTHER.

TELL ME WHEN. JUST WHEN CAN WE AVENGE OUR BROTHER'S DEATH?

WHAT IS IT, ZHANG FEI?

LOOK, I KNOW YOU HAVE YOUR POSITION AS KING OF HANZHONG TO CONSIDER, BUT CAN'T I ALONE AT LEAST RETALIATE?

HAVING SWORN THE SAME OATH OF BROTHERHOOD IN WHICH WE PROMISED TO DIE TOGETHER, I UNDERSTAND YOUR FEELINGS COMPLETELY. HOWEVER, I MUST ASK YOU TO RESTRAIN YOURSELF FROM FALLING RIGHT INTO OUR ENEMIES' HANDS.

MY BLOOD IS BOILING OVER HERE, BROTHER! EVERY WAKING MOMENT, I THINK OF TAKING SUN QUAN'S HEAD!

ABSOLUTELY NOT. I WILL NOT PERMIT INDEPENDENT ACTIONS AT THIS TIME. LET US ASSUAGE OUR BROTHER'S SPIRIT FIRST WITH THE FUNERAL RITES.

IF YOU BREAK THE RULES, I WILL BE FORCED INTO PUNISHING YOU AS WELL.

ENOUGH! SAY NO MORE. DO NOT MAKE ANY RASH ACTIONS AT THIS TIME.

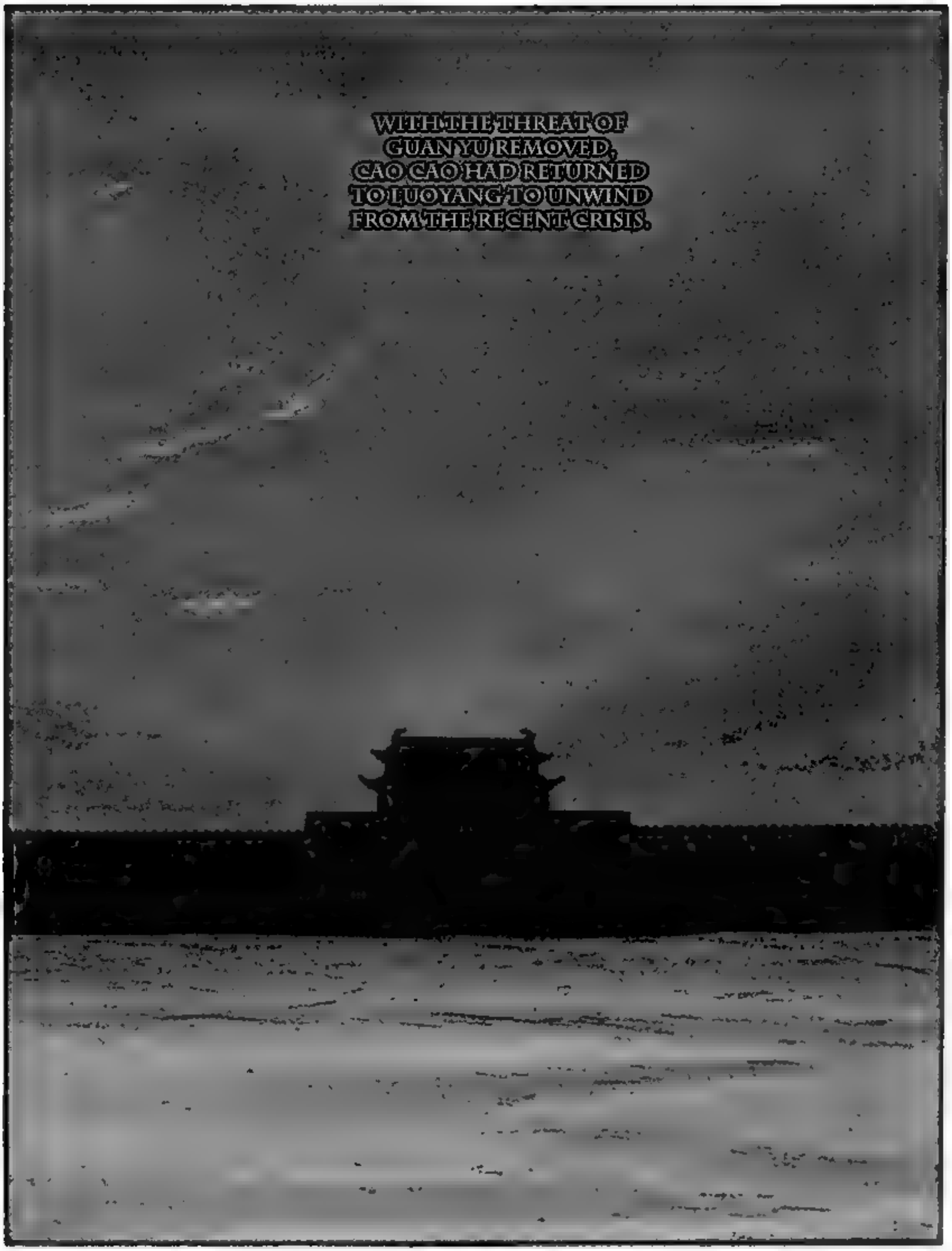
NO, NOT JUST SUN QUAN, BUT THE ONES WHO SIMPLY LET OUR BROTHER DIE AS WELL!





GUAN YU'S DEATH MADE NO SMALL IMPACT ON SHU. FOR THESE TWO MEN IN PARTICULAR THE LOSS OF A BROTHER THEY HAD SHARED ALL JOYS AND HARDSHIPS WITH CUT THEM DEEP TO THE BONE. THEIR HEARTS WERE PUSHED TO THEIR UTMOST LIMITS IN TRYING TO RESTRAIN THE OUTPOURING OF SO MANY EMOTIONS.

CAO CAO'S ILLNESS



IF ONLY THE REALM WERE UNITED, THIS WINE WOULD BE EVEN SWEETER.

IT IS GOOD TO HAVE PEACE AGAIN.

URG-

MNN...

YOUR HIGH-NESS!

YOUR HIGH-NESS?

PLEASE TRY TO RELAX, YOUR HIGHNESS.

IT'S... ANOTHER BOUT OF DIZZY SPELLS...

YES...

HERE IS YOUR MEDICINE

HOW ODD... MY HEADACHES AND DIZZY SPELLS ARE BECOMING SO FREQUENT THESE DAYS AS TO BE DAILY AS OF LATE.

OF COURSE NOT! YOUR HIGHNESS WAS THE ONE WHO GAVE HIM A LAVISH FUNERAL AND PAID FULL RESPECTS.

THEY SAY LU MENG WAS HAUNTED TO DEATH BY GUAN YU'S SPIRIT... IT COULDN'T BE THAT I'M BEING HAUNTED TOO, COULD IT...?

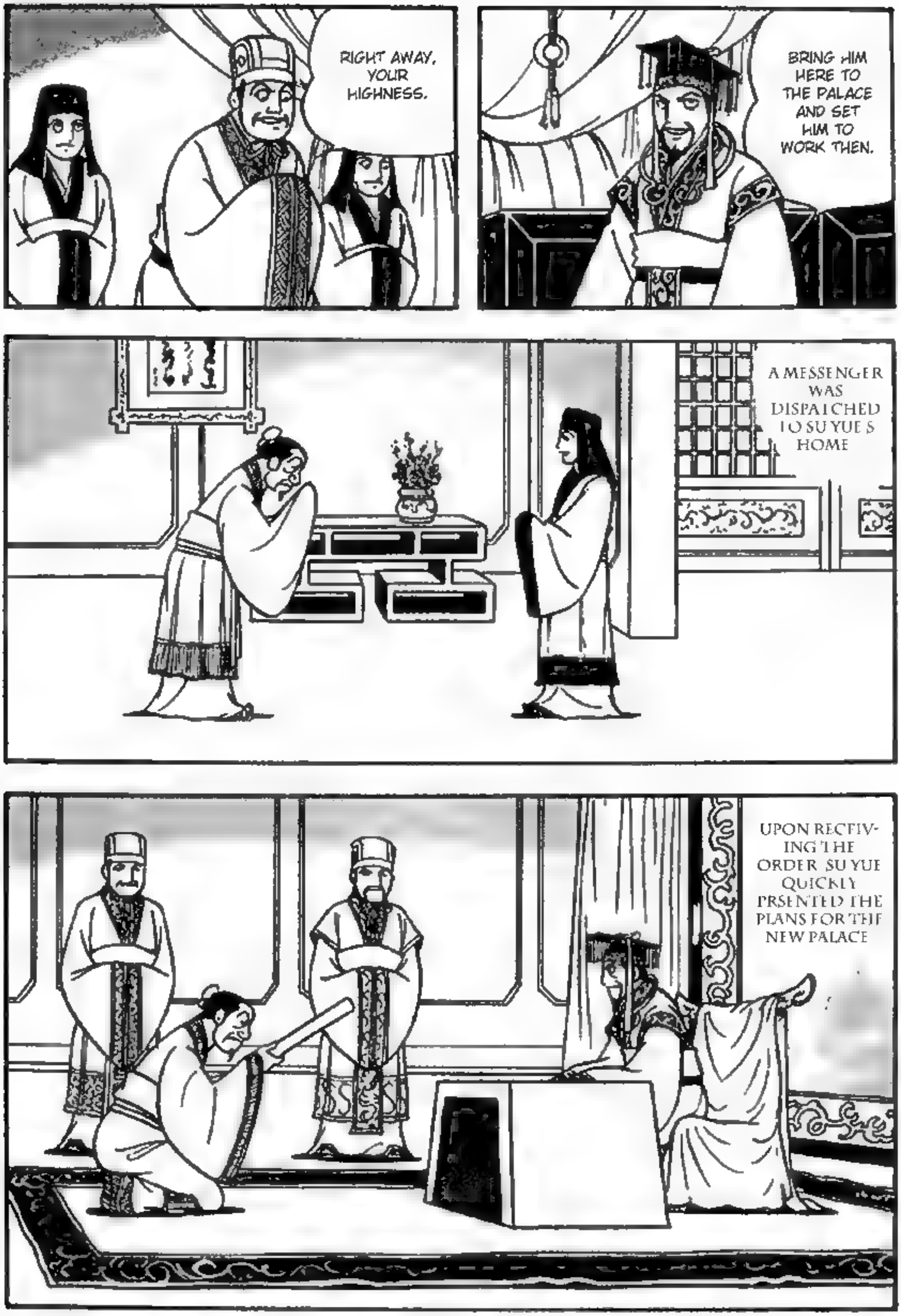
AH, A NEW PALACE TO BRIGHTEN UP THE MOOD?

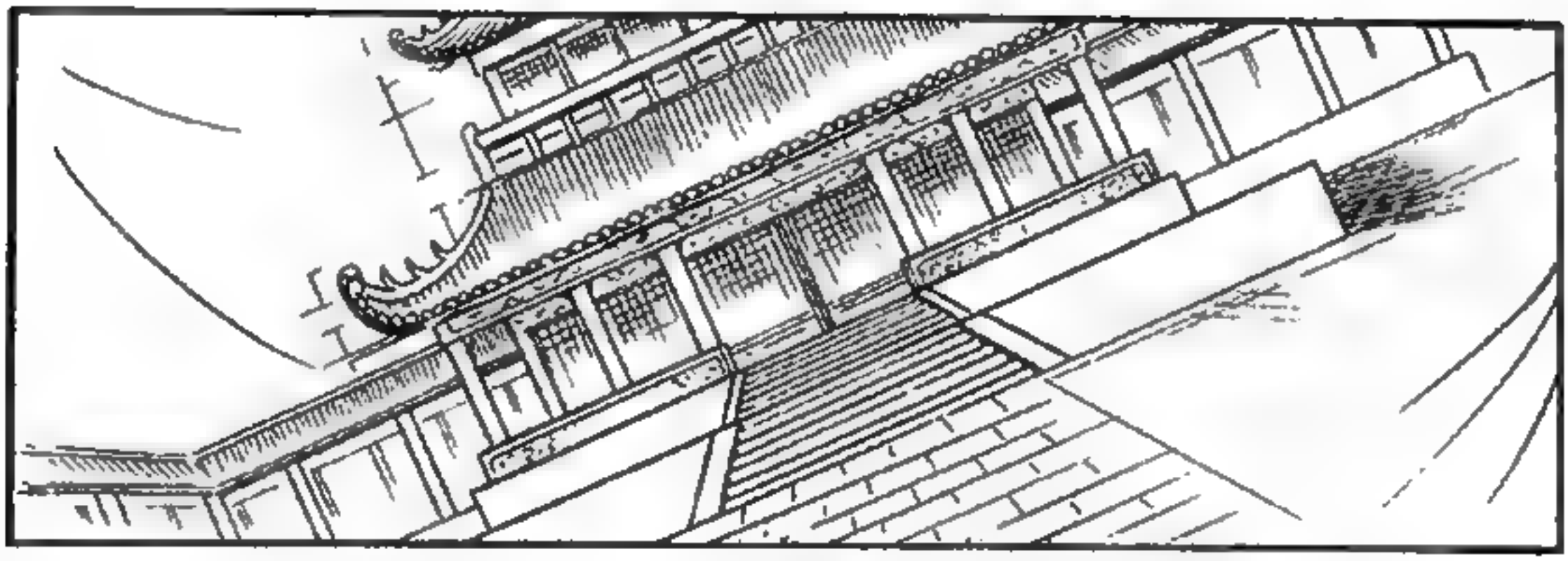
HOWEVER, IF YOU DO FEEL THAT YOUR CURRENT LIFE NEEDS A NEW CHANGE OF PACE, HOW DOES BUILDING A NEW PALACE TO RESIDE IN SOUND?

NOW THAT YOU MENTION IT, THIS CURRENT ONE IS QUITE OLD...

A MAN BY THE NAME OF SU YUE HERE IN LUOYANG IS SAID TO BE VERY CAPABLE.

YES, I BELIEVE I WILL HAVE A NEW PALACE CONSTRUCTED. WHICH ARCHITECT CAN I TRUST THE TASK TO?

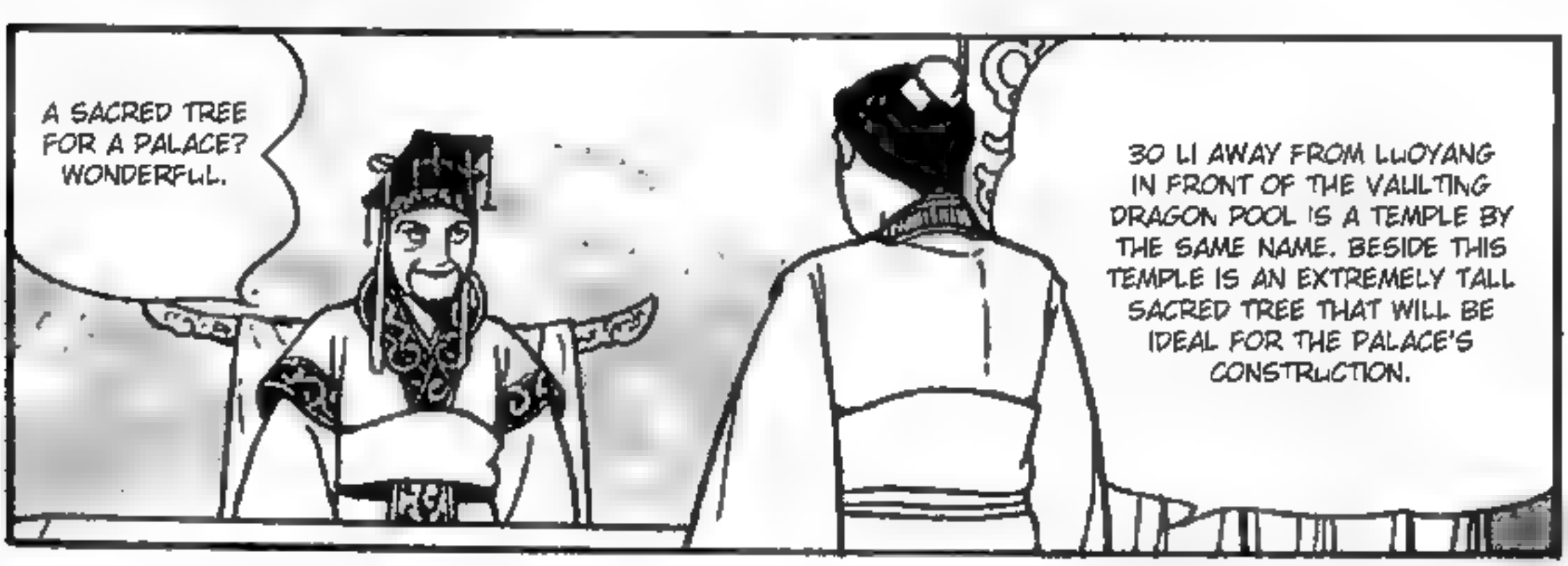

RIGHT AWAY, YOUR HIGHNESS.
BRING HIM HERE TO THE PALACE AND SET HIM TO WORK THEN.
A MESSENGER WAS DISPATCHED TO SU YUE S HOME
UPON RECTIV- ING THE ORDER SU YUE QUICKLY PRSENTED THE PLANS FOR THE NEW PALACE




BUT YOUR PLANS CALL FOR VERY LARGE BEAMS. ARE THERE TREES LARGE ENOUGH FOR SUCH BEAMS?


HMM... YES, I THINK I QUITE LIKE THIS.


THERE IS ONE IN PARTICU-LAR.


A SACRED TREE FOR A PALACE? WONDERFUL.
30 LI AWAY FROM LUOYANG IN FRONT OF THE VAULTING DRAGON POOL IS A TEMPLE BY THE SAME NAME. BESIDE THIS TEMPLE IS AN EXTREMELY TALL SACRED TREE THAT WILL BE IDEAL FOR THE PALACE'S CONSTRUCTION.


THANK YOU, SIR.


I HEREBY GIVE YOU PERMIS-SION TO START CONSTRUCTION.

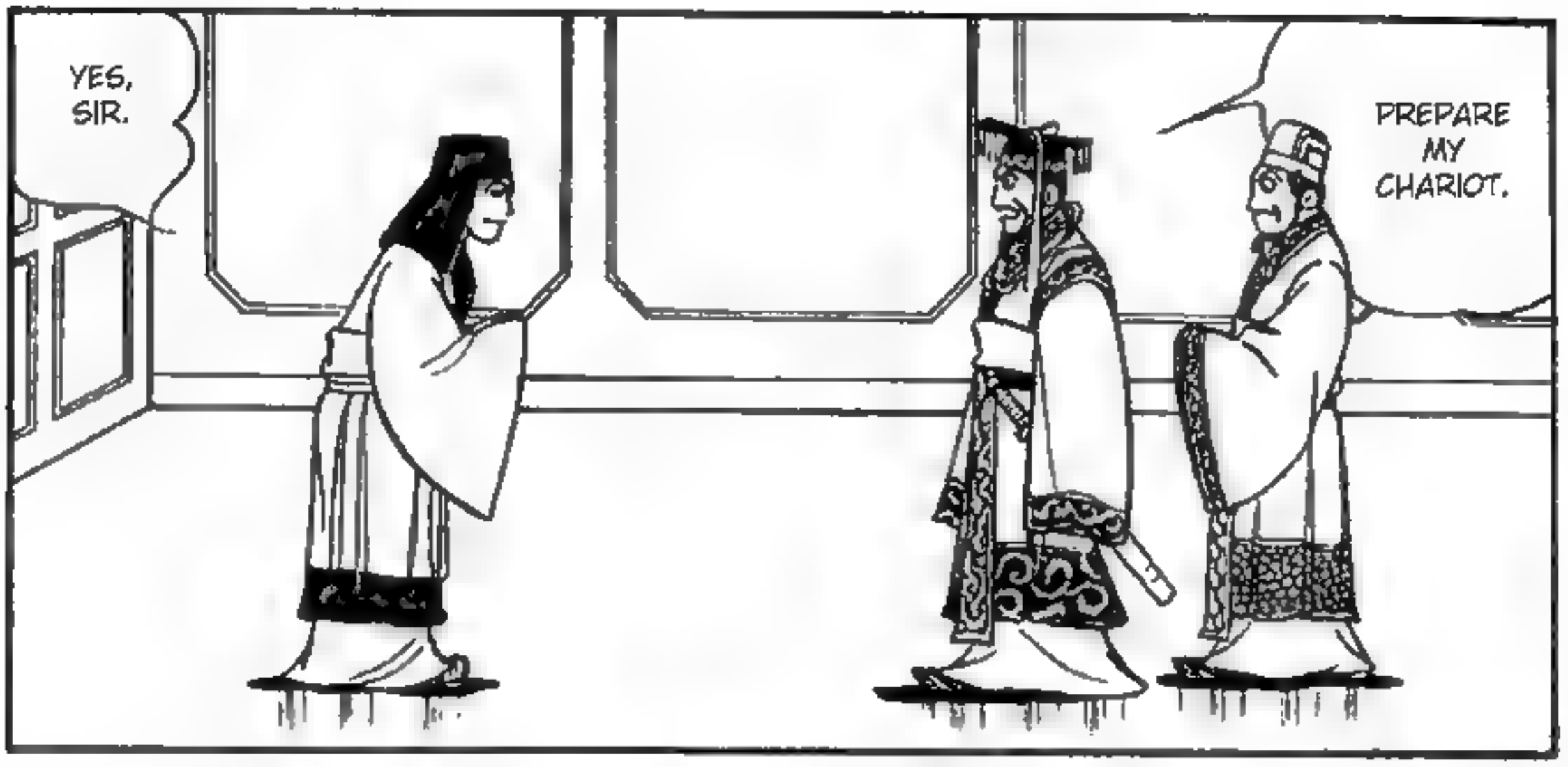

HOWEVER, THE SUPERSTITIOUS WORKMEN REFUSED TO CUT DOWN THE SACRED TREE FOR FEAR OF BEING CURSED

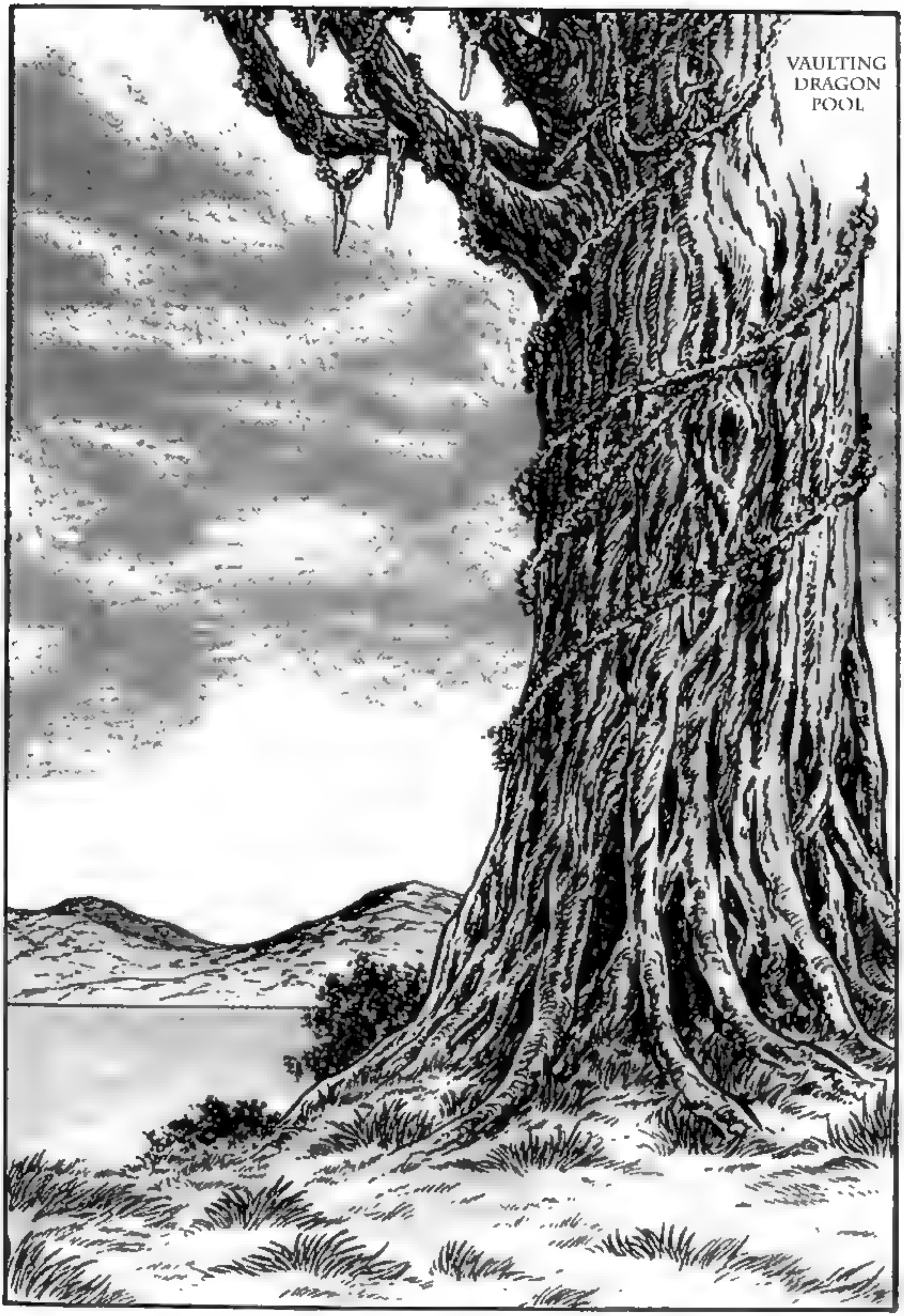
THEY FEAR THE TREE WILL CURSE THEM.

THE WORKMEN WON'T CUT DOWN THE TREE?

FINE, I'LL GO AND CLEAR THEM OF THEIR SUPERSTITIONS.

IS THAT SO?


YES, SIR.
PREPARE MY CHARIOT.


VAULTING
DRAGON
POOL

SO THIS IS THE SACRED TREE?

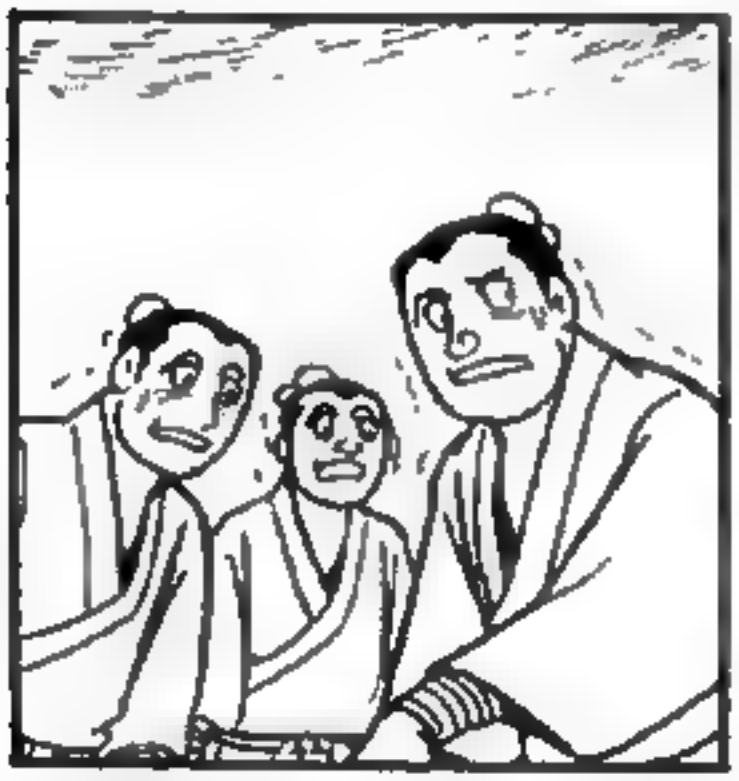
LISTEN UP, ALL OF YOU!

I WILL MAKE THE FIRST CUT, SO THAT IF A SPIRIT REALLY DOES RESIDE IN THIS TREE, IT CAN CURSE ME INSTEAD OF YOU WORKMEN.

HEAR ME WELL, TREE SPIRIT! YOUR BODY IS TO BE CUT DOWN AND MADE INTO A BEAUTIFUL PALACE, WHERE YOU WILL LIVE IN BLISSFUL LUXURY. YOU SHOULD BE GRATEFUL!


T-THE TREE SAP LOOKS LIKE BLOOD...

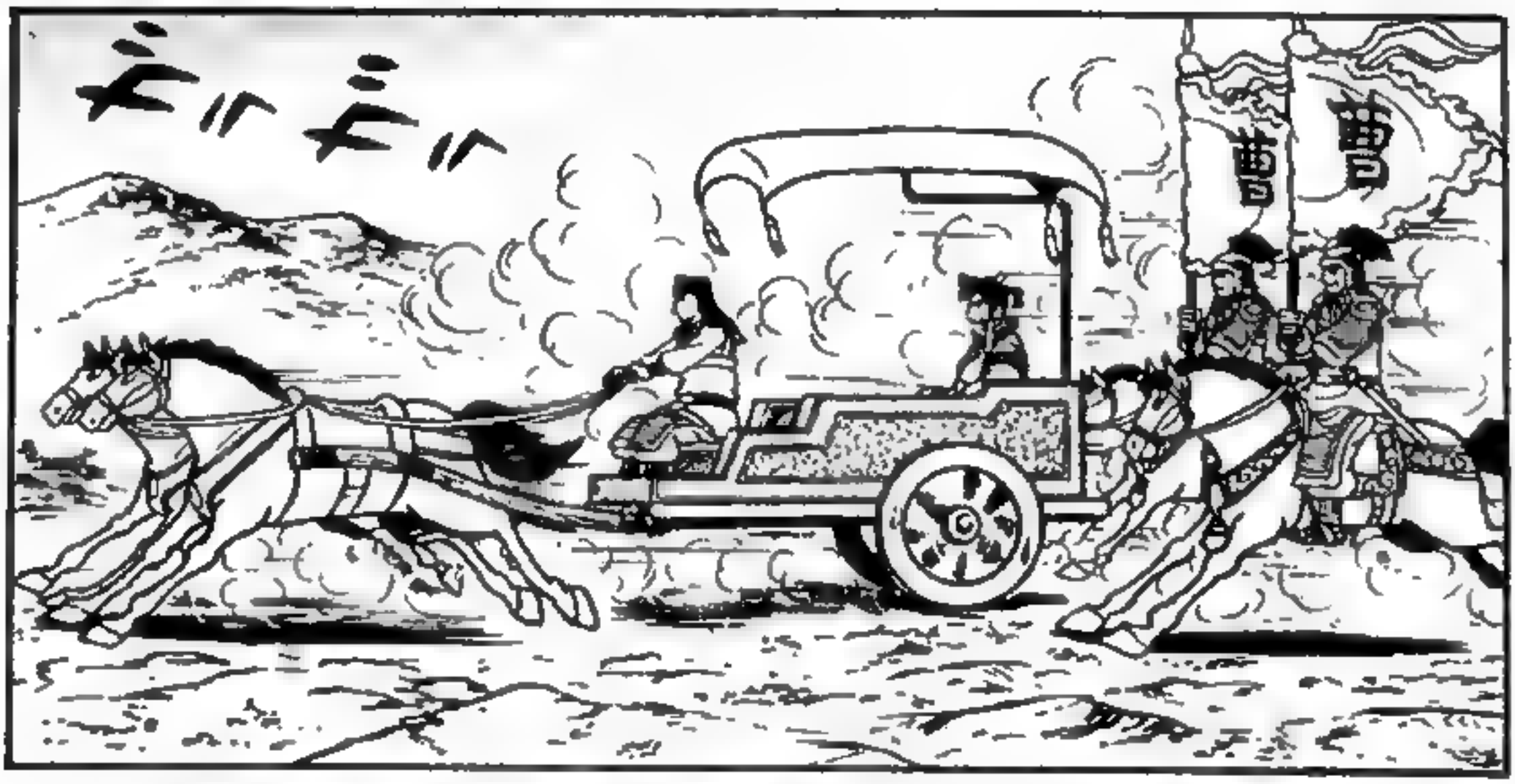







YES, SIR.
I WILL RETIRE TO THE PALACE NOW.


FEAR NOT! AS I SAID, IF THE TREE WERE TO CURSE ANYBODY, IT SHALL BE ME. NOW CONTINUE ON WITH YOUR WORK!






JUST RELAX AND PROCEED WITH YOUR WORK.


R-RIGHT, SIR...


DUH-


URG-




MY... MY HEAD...


IS SOMETHING WRONG, YOUR HIGHNESS?


Y-YES, SIR!
QUICKEN OUR PACE!

CALL THE DOCTOR IMMEDIATELY!

YOUR HIGHNESS!

PLEASE STAY STRONG, SIR...

YOUR HIGHNESS!

R-RIGHT AWAY!

HIS HIGHNESS' CONDITION SEEMS TO BE SEVERE, PLEASE ATTEND TO HIM AT ONCE!

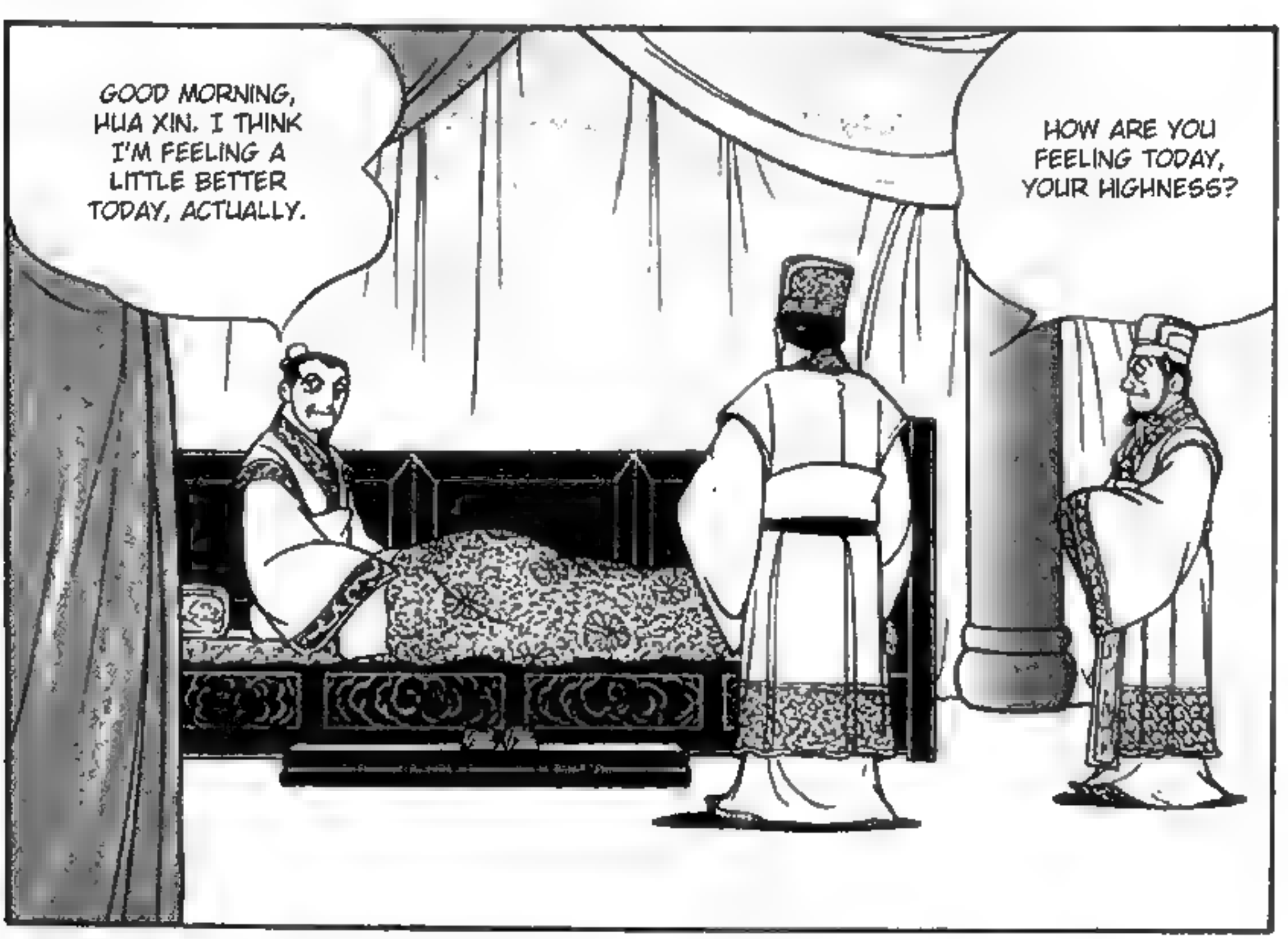
OH DEAR, HIS FEVER IS VERY HIGH.

YOUR HIGHNESS, YOU MUST DRINK THIS MEDICINE.

HOWEVER, CAO CAO'S CONDITION SEEMED TO WORSEN BY DAY SECRETLY IN HUSHED TONES, THE PEOPLE WHISPERED THAT HE MUST HAVE BEEN CURSED BY THE TREE SPIRIT

THE GREAT PHYSICIAN HUA TUO





HUA TUO? AH! HE'S RUMOURED TO BE THE GREATEST DOCTOR IN THE REALM, IS HE NOT?

THERE IS A DOCTOR BY THE NAME OF HUA TUO I WOULD LIKE TO RECOMMEND TO YOUR HIGHNESS.

FOR TREATING DISEASES OF THE INTERNAL ORGANS, HE USES HIS SECRET "HEMP BOILING POWDER POTION" TO INDUCE A SLEEP SO DEEP, IT IS AS IF THE PATIENT IS ALMOST HALF-DEAD! AND DURING THIS SLUMBER, THE PATIENT'S ABDOMEN IS CUT OPEN AND THE SICK ORGANS ARE WASHED WITH MEDICINAL FLUIDS. AFTER THIS, THE INCISION IS ALL SUTURED UP. REALLY, HIS TECHNIQUES ARE LIKE NO OTHER'S!

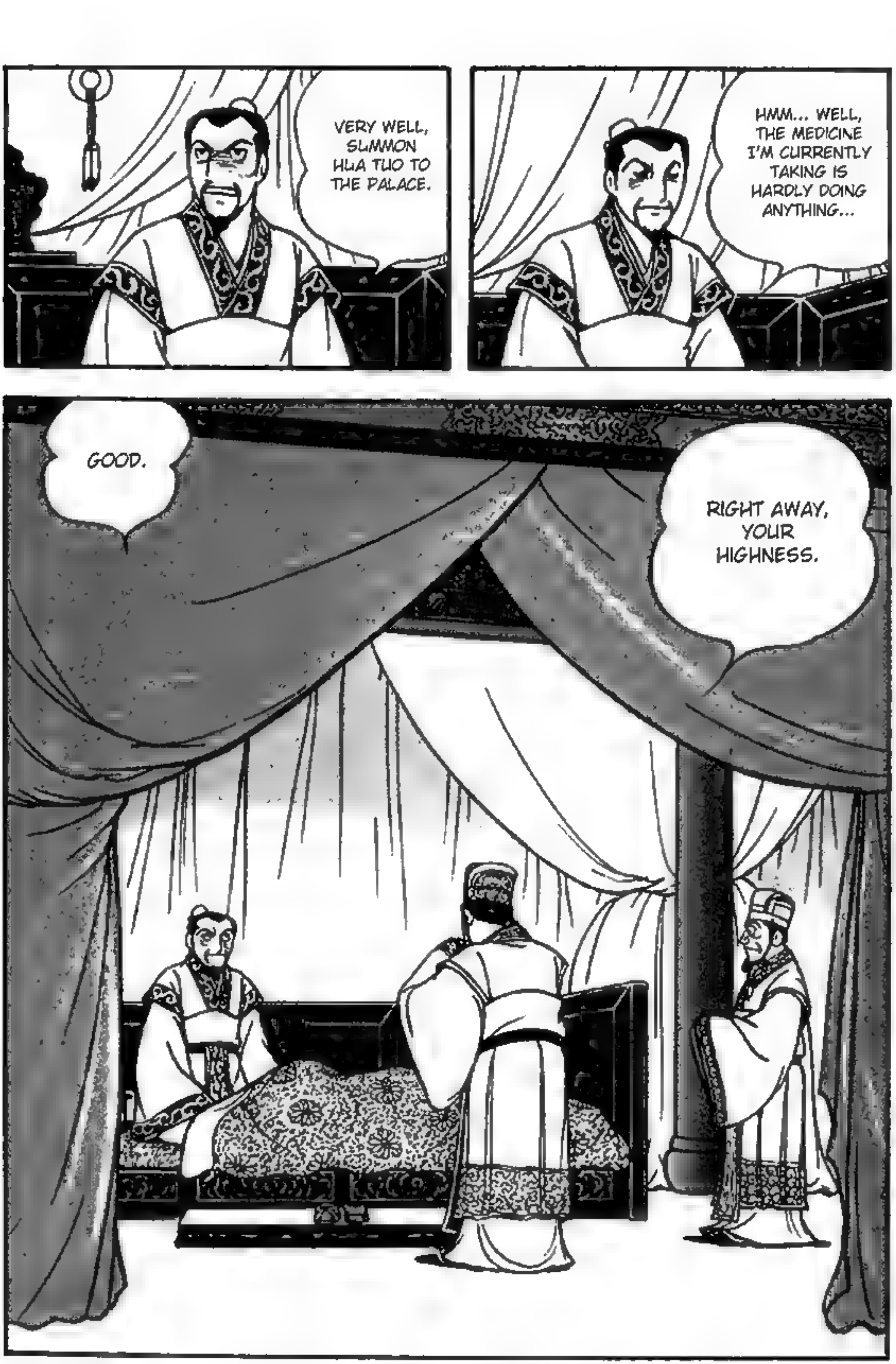
YES, IT'S SAID THAT THERE IS NO ILLNESS INCURABLE FOR HIM.

NOT NECESSARILY, BUT 20 DAYS IS ALL IT TAKES FOR EVEN PATIENTS WITH SERIOUS ILLNESSES TO RECOVER.

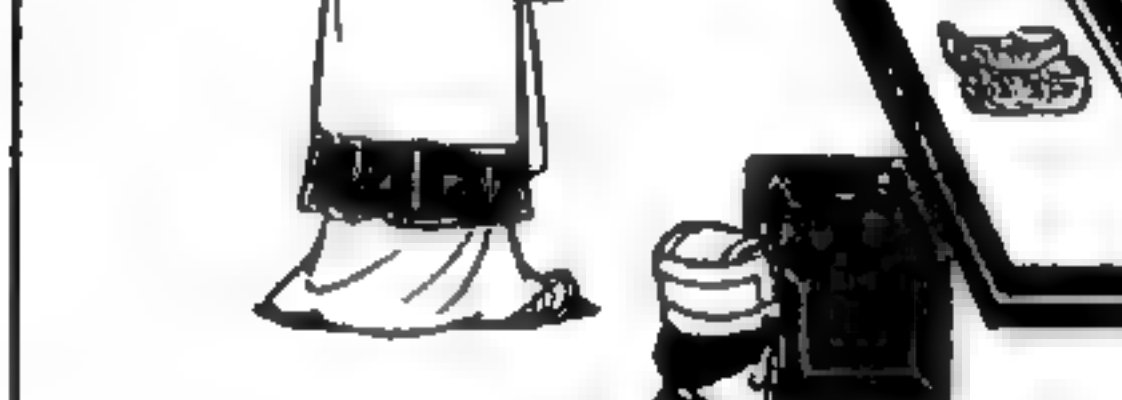
ARE... ALL OF HIS TREATMENTS SO EXTREME?

VERY WELL, SUMMON HUA TUO TO THE PALACE.

HMM... WELL, THE MEDICINE I'M CURRENTLY TAKING IS HARDLY DOING ANYTHING...


GOOD.
RIGHT AWAY, YOUR HIGHNESS.


YOU FLATTER ME, SIR.
AH, SO YOU ARE HUA TUO, THE SO-CALLED GREATEST DOCTOR IN THE REALM?


THAT IS LIKELY DUE TO A BUILD UP OF HUMORS.


I'VE BEEN HAVING HEADACHES QUITE OFTEN AS OF LATE. SOMETIMES, IT IS SO SEVERE THAT I CAN HARDLY EAT OR DO ANYTHING.

YES, THAT IS WHY NONE OF THE MEDICINE YOU HAVE BEEN TAKING HAVE HAD ANY EFFECT.

WHAT!? IN MY DRINK?

NO, BUT SURGERY IS THE ONLY VIABLE TREATMENT. I WILL ADMINISTER MY SPECIAL POTION TO RENDER YOU UNCONSCIOUS WHILE I MAKE AN INCISION ON YOUR SKULL TO EXCISE THE EXCESS MATTER.

ARE YOU SAYING THIS IS AN INCURABLE ILLNESS?

8 OR 9 TIMES OUT OF 10, YES.

AND... THAT WILL CURE ME?

I'M AFRAID SO, YOUR HIGHNESS. IN SUCH A SCENARIO, YOU SHOULD ACCEPT THAT THE HEAVENS HAVE DECIDED YOUR TIME HAS COME.

SO THERE'S AT LEAST A 10% CHANCE THAT I WON'T BE CURED, IS THAT WHAT YOU'RE SAYING!?

Y-Y-YOU, QUACK! YOU ONLY SEE ME AS AN EXPEND-ABLE TEST CASE FOR YOUR CRAZY PRACTICES!

WHAT!? SO I SHOULD GIVE UP AND BE CONTENT WITH MY DEATH!?

SILENCE! AN ARM IS NOT THE SAME THING AS A HUMAN SKULL!

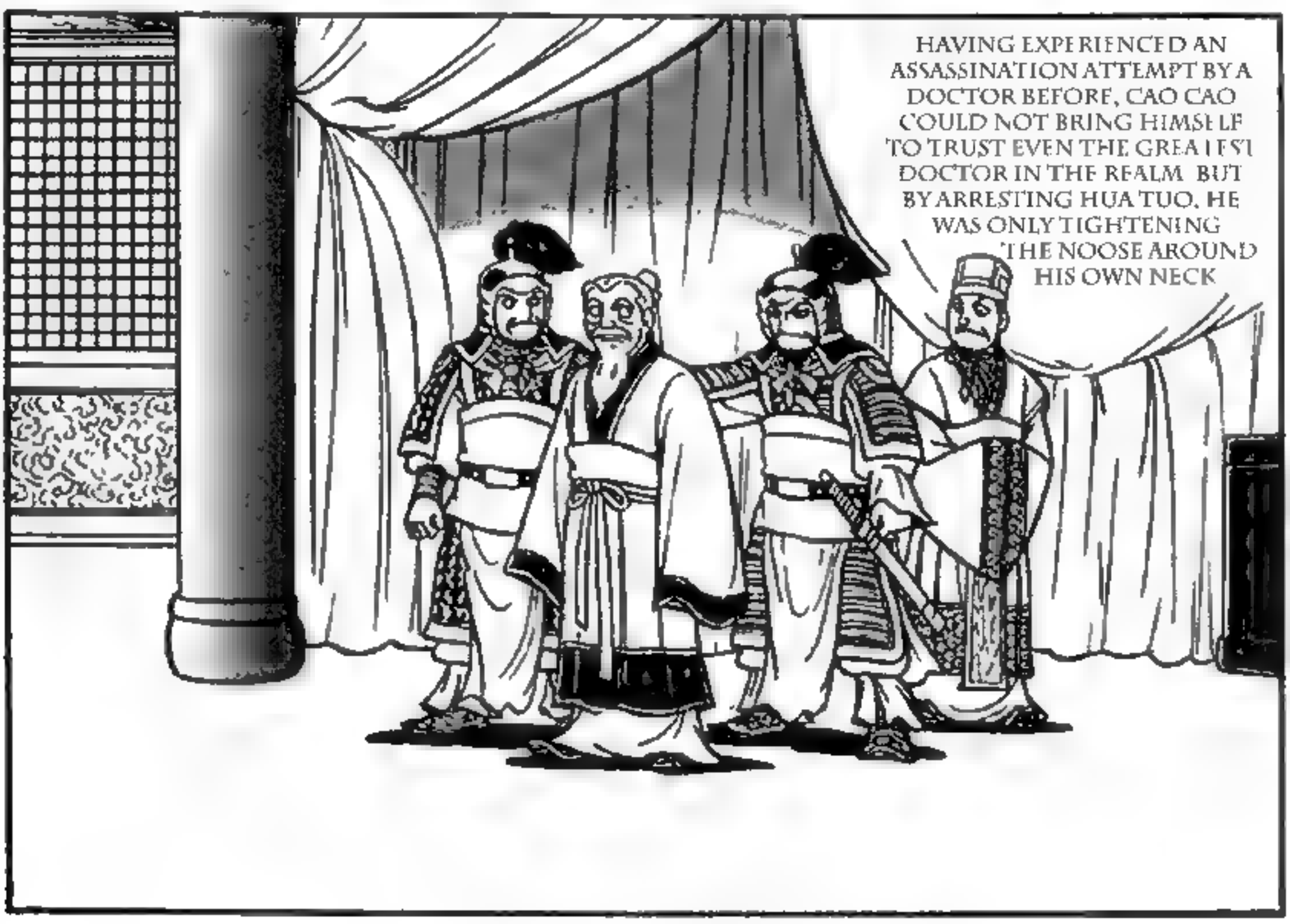
SOME TIME AGO, GUAN YU RECEIVED AN ARROW WOUND THAT BEGAN TO FESTER. HE ALLOWED ME TO CUT INTO HIS FLESH, AND SCRAPE AWAY AT THE BONE TO REMOVE THE POISONED MATTER, ALL WITHOUT MY ANAESTHETIC POTION. SURELY IF A MERE GENERAL CAN WITHSTAND SUCH TREATMENT, THE KING OF WEI CAN PUT UP WITH MY PROPOSED SURGERY.

I ONLY SPEAK OF THE WORST CASE SCENARIO OUT OF MY HUMILITY. IF YOU WISH FOR ME TO BE FRANK, THAN I AM QUITE CONFIDENT I CAN CURE YOU.


TAKE THIS MAN TO PRISON FOR INTERROGATION!


OH, I GET IT NOW... YOU BLAME ME FOR THE DEATH OF YOUR BELOVED PATIENT GUAN YU, SO YOU PLOT TO KILL ME, AREN'T YOU!?




HAVING EXPERIENCED AN ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT BY A DOCTOR BEFORE, CAO CAO COULD NOT BRING HIMSELF TO TRUST EVEN THE GREATEST DOCTOR IN THE REALM. BUT BY ARRESTING HUA TUO, HE WAS ONLY TIGHTENING THE NOOSE AROUND HIS OWN NECK

AGAIN, BAILIFF? IF YOUR SUPERIORS WERE TO FIND OUT YOU'VE BEEN BRINGING ME FOOD AND WINE, YOU WILL SURELY LOSE YOUR JOB, IF NOT WORSE.

PLEASE EAT SOME OF THIS, SIR.

OH? A FELLOW NATIVE OF WU?

I ONLY DO THIS BECAUSE I TRULY BELIEVE YOU ARE INNOCENT. WHEN I LIVED IN WU, I HEARD MANY TALES OF YOUR DEEDS AND GREATLY ADMIRED YOU.

OH, SO YOU'VE STUDIED MEDICINE?

I ALWAYS LIKED MEDICINE AND EVEN STUDIED UNDER A DOCTOR AT ONE POINT IN TIME. THAT IS WHY I'M SO FAMILIAR WITH YOUR WORK.

YES. IN FACT, EVEN MY NAME IS WU.

TO BE HONEST, I DOUBT I WILL WALK OUT OF THIS PRISON ALIVE, SO I'VE BEEN THINKING ABOUT HOW TO REPAY YOUR KINDNESS WHILE I'M STILL ALIVE.

RIGHT, OF COURSE.

YES, NOW PLEASE FINISH THIS MEAL BEFORE ANYONE ELSE COMES.

I'D LIKE YOU TO USE THE KNOW-LEDGE CONTAINED WITHIN TO CURE THE SICK AND WOUNDED IN THIS WORLD.

THERE'S A VERY VALUABLE BOOK ABOUT THE MEDI-CINAL ARTS I KEEP AT HOME WHICH I WISH TO GIVE TO YOU.

YOU'D REALLY GIVE ME SUCH A VALUABLE BOOK...!?

IF YOU HAVE SOMETHING I CAN WRITE WITH, I CAN WRITE A LETTER FOR MY FAMILY SO THAT THEY'LL PASS THE BOOK ONTO YOU.

!

THEN LET ME QUICKLY GO GET A BRUSH AND PAPER.

YES, IT HAS NO USE UNLESS SOMEONE PUTS ITS CONTENTS TO PRACTICE.

IF HE CAN GO ON TO TREAT THE ILL IN MY PLACE, I HAVE NO REGRETS REMAINING IN THIS LIFE.

GOOD.

I BROUGHT YOU SOME-THING TO WRITE WITH, SIR.

SHOW THIS LETTER TO MY FAMILY, AND THEY WILL SURELY GIVE YOU THE BOOK.

IT IS TITLED, "BOOK OF THE GREEN SATCHEL." IN IT, I'VE WRITTEN DOWN ALL THE KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE I'VE GAINED OVER THE DECADES OF MY MEDICAL PRACTICE, OUTLINING TREATMENT METHODS FOR ALL SORTS OF ILLNESSES. I HAVE NEVER SHOWN IT TO ANYONE ELSE BEFORE.

THANK YOU, SIR.

WU THE BAILIFF SECRETLY TOOK THE LETTER BACK HOME. HE CONTINUED TO BRING FOOD FOR HUA TUO IN THE DAYS FOLLOWING.

SEVERAL MORE DAYS PASSED SINCE THEN...

Y-YES, SIR.

OPEN UP. WE'RE UNDER THE KING OF WEI'S ORDERS.

HM?

ギィィ



DISPOSE OF THE CORPSE ACCORD-INGLY.

AS PER THE KING OF WEI'S ORDERS, HUA TUO HAS BEEN EXECUTED. APPARENTLY, HE'D BEEN HAUNTING HIS HIGHNESS AND AGGRAVATING HIS HEALTH, IN ADDITION TO HIS PLOT TO KILL BY MALPRACTICE.

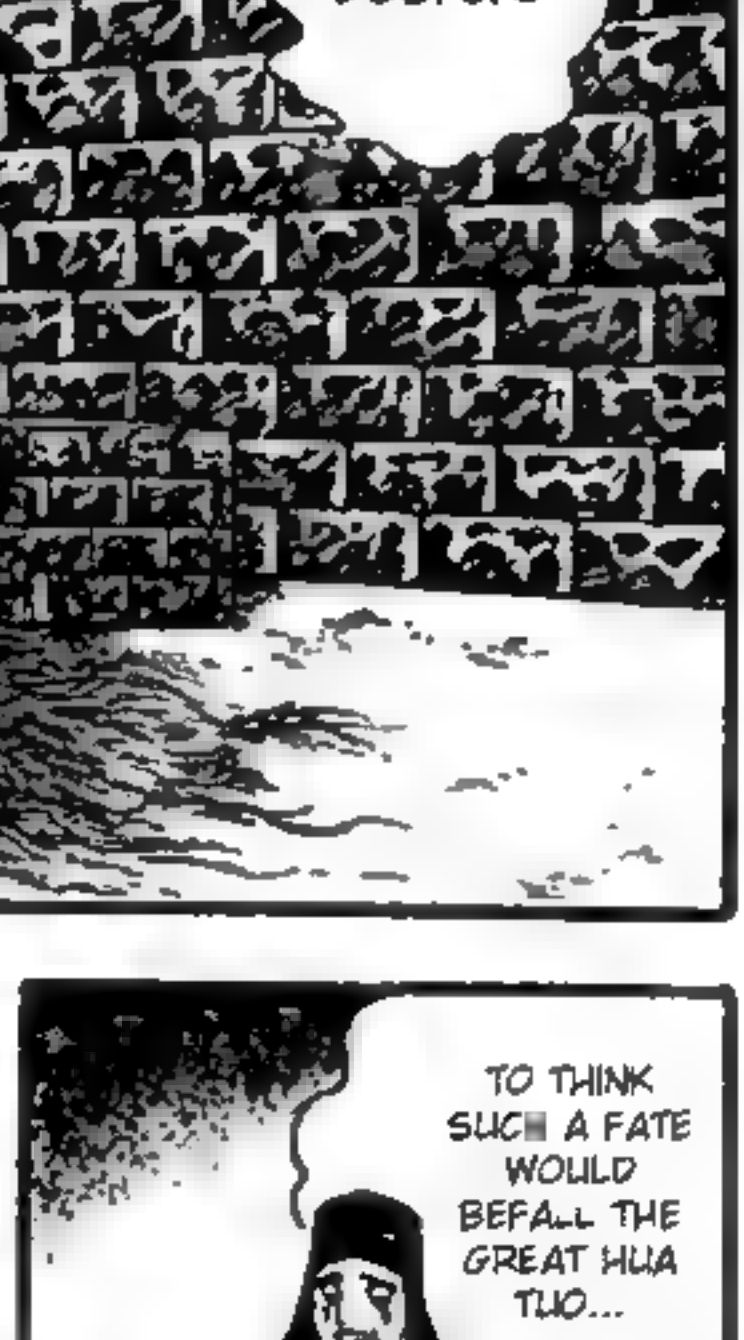
Y-YES, SIR.


DOCTOR HUA TUO!




DOCTOR!




TO THINK SUCH A FATE WOULD BEFALL THE GREAT HUA TUO...


QUIT? BUT WHAT WILL YOU DO FOR A LIVING FROM NOW?
I'VE QUIT MY JOB AS BAILIFF.
WHY ARE YOU HOME AT THIS HOUR, DEAR?
?
GUESS WHAT I'VE GOT HERE.
DON'T WORRY. BRING ME A DRINK FIRST.

HOW DID YOU OBTAIN SUCH A VALUABLE BOOK?

THIS IS THE "BOOK OF THE GREEN SATCHEL," CONTAINING ALL THE MEDICAL KNOWLEDGE OF THE GREAT HUA TUO.

BY STUDYING THIS, I, TOO, CAN BECOME A GREAT DOCTOR.

OH...

HUA TUO WAS IMPRISONED BY THE KING OF WEI AND I'D BEEN LOOKING AFTER HIM. TO THANK ME, HE GAVE ME THIS BOOK.

CONSIDER YOURSELF THE WIFE OF THE GREAT DOCTOR WU FROM NOW! COME ON, LET US DRINK TOWARDS A NEW SUCCESSFUL LIFE!

HM?

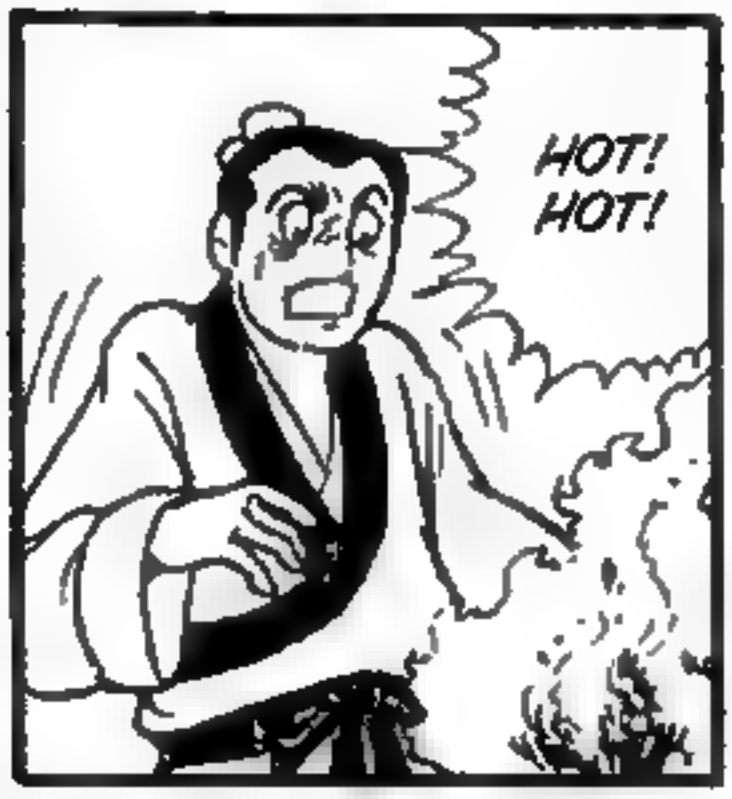
I DRANK A LITTLE TOO MUCH...

YAAWN

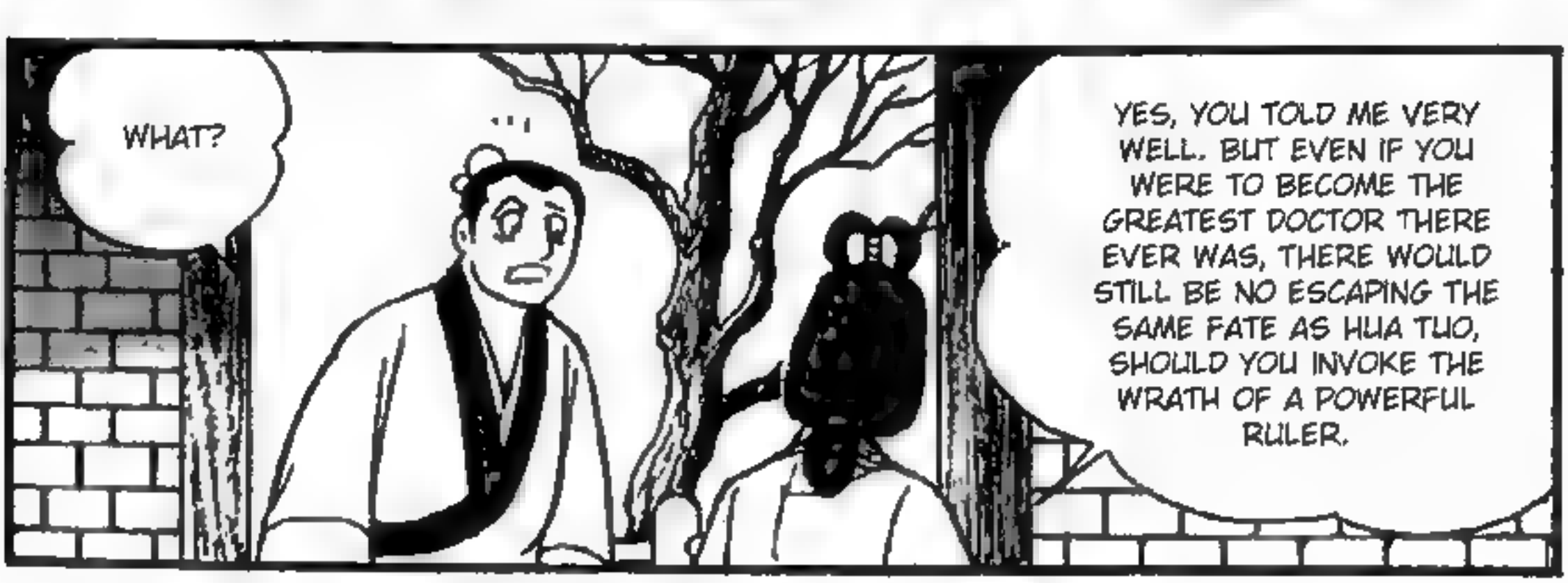
AGHH!




WHAT'RE YOU DOING! THAT'S HUA TUO'S BOOK YOU'RE BURNING!


HOT! HOT!

WHAT'S THE BIG IDEA!? I TOLD YOU HOW VALUABLE THIS IS LAST NIGHT, DIDN'T I!?


WHAT?
...
YES, YOU TOLD ME VERY WELL. BUT EVEN IF YOU WERE TO BECOME THE GREATEST DOCTOR THERE EVER WAS, THERE WOULD STILL BE NO ESCAPING THE SAME FATE AS HUA TUO, SHOULD YOU INVOKE THE WRATH OF A POWERFUL RULER.




I AM ONLY BURNING AN OMINOUS ITEM, SO THAT HER HUSBAND IS NOT EXECUTED, LEAVING BEHIND A POOR WIDOW.


THUS, THE GREAT PHYSICIAN HUA TUO'S "BOOK OF THE GREEN SATCHEL," TURNED TO ASHES, FOREVER HIDING ITS ADVANCED MEDICAL KNOWLEDGE FROM FUTURE GENERATIONS.

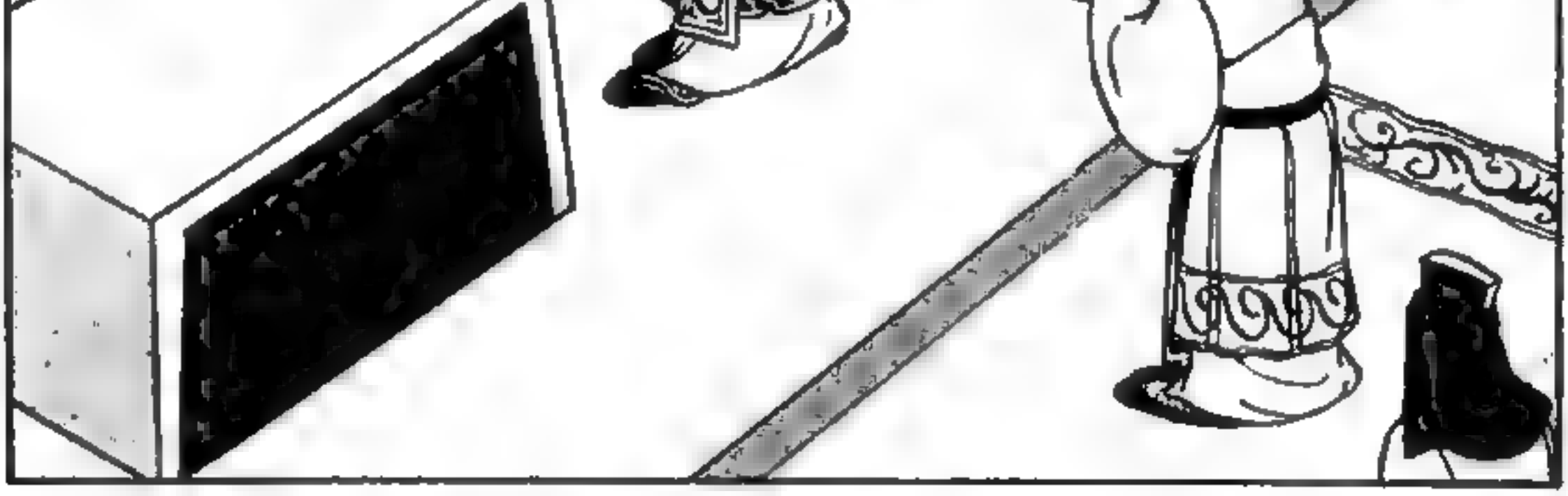
CAO CAO'S DEATH








THANK YOU, I APPRECIATE HIS CONCERN.
HAVING HEARD YOUR RECENT ILLNESS, SUN QUAN HAS SENT ME ON HIS BEHALF TO WISH YOU A SPEEDY RECOVERY, SIR.


THANK YOU. I WILL READ IT LATER SO YOU MAY NOW RETIRE TO THE GUEST'S QUARTERS.
I ALSO PRESENT YOU TH S LETTER FROM SUN QUAN.

EXCUSE ME THEN...

"YOUR SUBJECT, SUN QUAN,"

YES, SIR.

SIMA YI, READ THIS FOR ME.

"YOUR SUBJECT, SUN QUAN, RECOGNIZES THAT THE MANDATE OF HEAVEN HAS COME TO YOUR HIGHNESS."

YES, THAT IS WHAT HE WROTE.

MY SUBJECT?

"THUS, I HUMBLY ANTICIPATE YOUR HIGHNESS' ASCENSION TO THE IMPERIAL THRONE, AND YOUR EVENTUAL SUBJUGATION OF SHU TO UNITE THE REALM AT LAST. AS YOUR SUBJECT, I WOULD OF COURSE SUPPORT YOUR ARMIES IN THIS ENDEAVOUR IMMEDIATELY UPON YOUR ORDER."

YOUR HIGHNESS, SUN QUAN DOES MAKE A GOOD POINT.

HA, THAT SCOUNDREL ASKS ME TO COMMIT HIGH TREASON AND WILLINGLY ROAST MYSELF LIKE A CHESTNUT!?

PERHAPS IT WOULD NOT BE ENTIRELY INAPPROPRIATE FOR YOUR HIGHNESS TO INDEED ASCEND TO THE IMPERIAL THRONE?

THE IMPERIAL HOUSE HAS DETERIORATED TO THE POINT IT IS NOW COMPLETELY INCAPABLE. IT IS ONLY THANKS TO YOUR SHEER FORCE OF WILL THAT SOME SEMBLANCE OF PEACE HAS BEEN MAINTAINED IN THESE OTHERWISE CHAOTIC TIMES.

BUT THE IMPERIAL HOUSE IS SO WEAK IT CAN HARDLY EVEN MAINTAIN ITSELF. THE REALM NEEDS A VIRTUOUS SOVEREIGN TO ASSERT HIS MANDATE OF HEAVEN BY BEGINNING A NEW DYNASTY.

NO, I HAVE SPENT MY ENTIRE LIFE IN LOYAL SERVITUDE TO HAN. HAVING ASCENDED TO THE KING OF WEI, WHAT MORE CAN I DESIRE? EVEN IF THE MANDATE OF HEAVENS HAS COME TO ME, I WILL NOT COMPROMISE MY LOYALTY, JUST AS KING WEN OF ZHOU DID IN HISTORY

BUT...

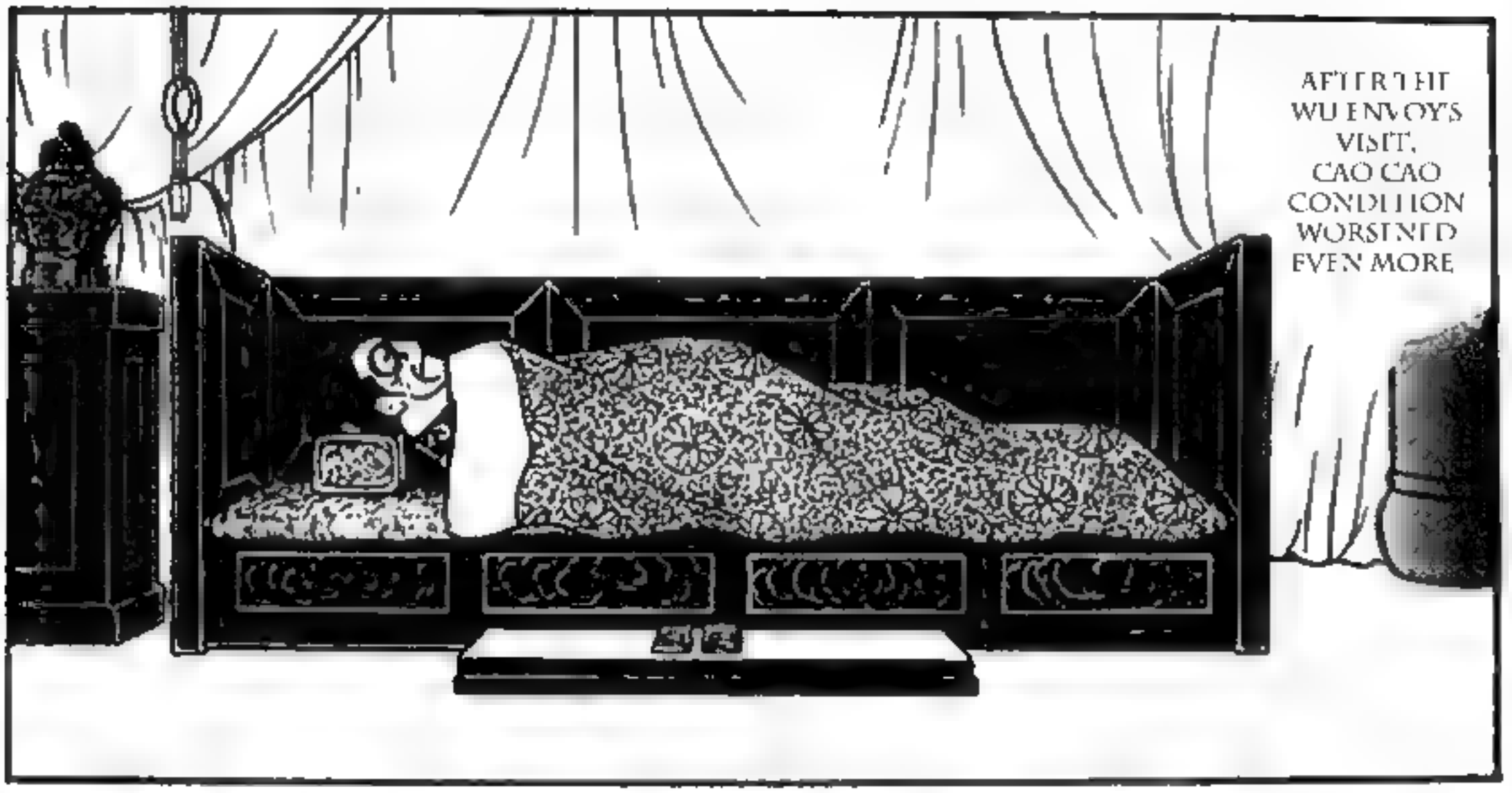
SAY NO MORE.

LET HIM BE THE GENERAL OF THE FLYING CAVALRY, LORD OF NANCHANG, AS WELL AS THE IMPERIAL PROTECTOR OF JINGZHOU.

AH YES, THAT IS PROPER.

YOUR HIGHNESS, SINCE SUN QUAN HAS WILLINGLY DECLARED HIS ALLEGIANCE BY STATING HIMSELF AS YOUR SUBJECT, IT MAY BE APPROPRIATE TO CONFER RANK AND OFFICE UPON HIM.

YES, SIR.


AFTER THE WU ENVOY'S VISIT, CAO CAO CONDITION WORSENED EVEN MORE


HE BEGAN TO EVEN HAVE NIGHTLY HALLUCINATIONS

HA... IF THIS IS HEAVEN'S WILL, THEN NO AMOUNT OF EXORCISMS WILL HELP.

YOUR HALLUCINATIONS MUST BE THE ACT OF SOME VENGEFUL SPIRIT. SHALL I CALL TAOIST PRIESTS TO PERFORM AN EXORCISM?

THE WORLD WOULD LAUGH AT ME FOR RESORTING TO SUCH OUTLANDISH MEASURES AND CALL ME AN UNDIGNIFIED COWARD.

YES, SIR.

I NAME MY ELDEST SON, CAO PI, AS MY HEIR. PLEASE SERVE HIM AS YOU WOULD SERVE ME SO THAT THE REALM IS MAINTAINED.

MORE IMPORTANT IS THE MATTER OF DECIDING MY SUCCESSOR. I MAY HAVE 4 SONS, BUT NONE STAND OUT ENOUGH NOR ARE PREPARED FOR THE HARDSHIPS AWAITING THEM IN THE FUTURE. THEY WILL REQUIRE YOUR FAITHFUL SERVICE AND WISDOM.

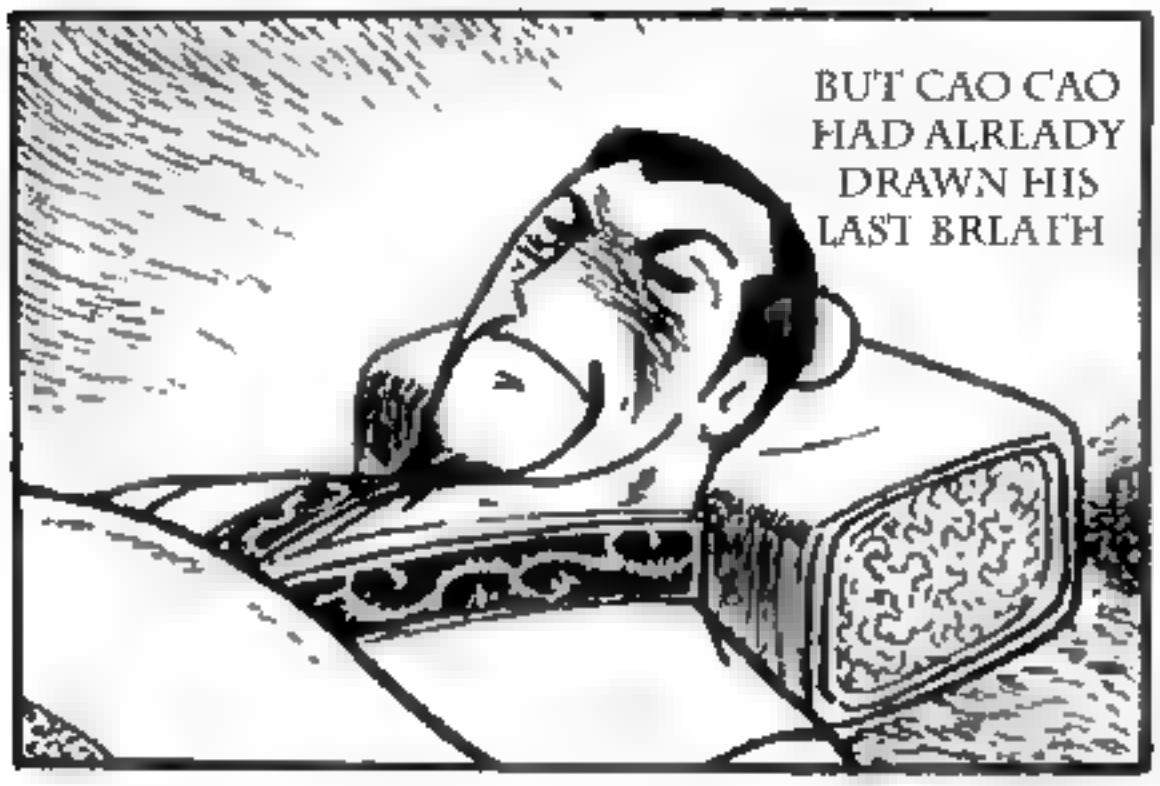



MY LIFE...
WAS A
LONG
BATTLE.

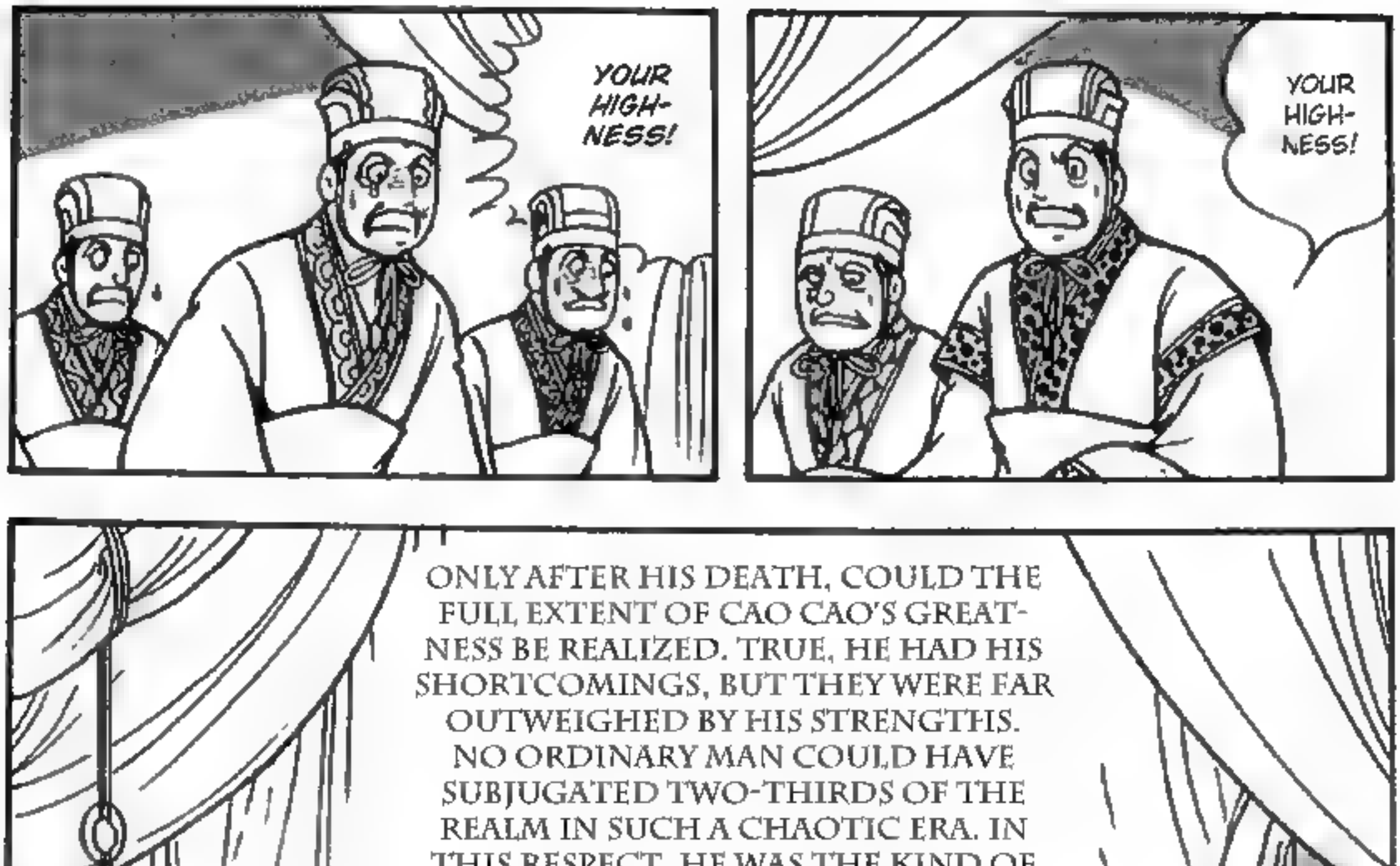

YOUR
HIGHNESS?
YOUR
HIGHNESS!?





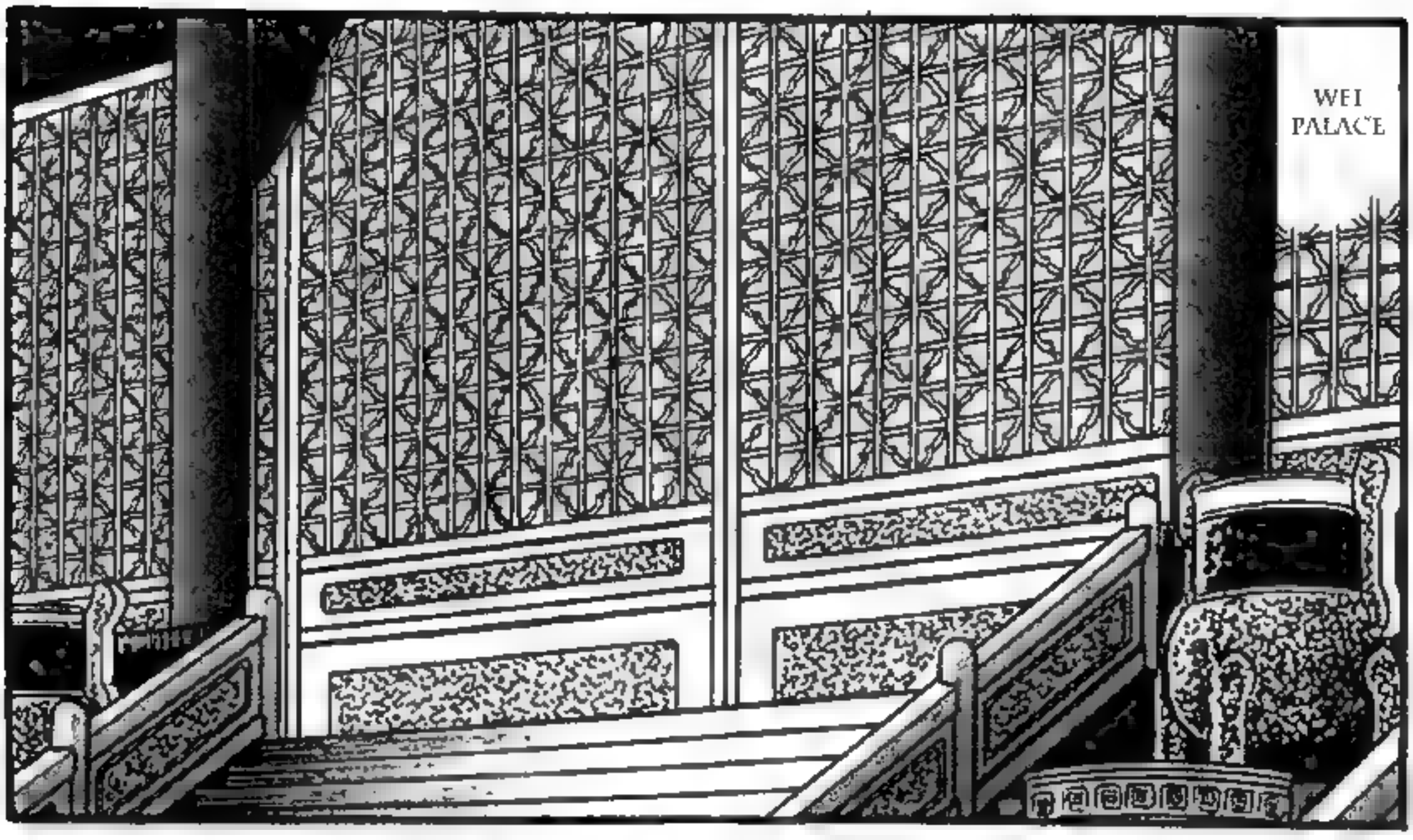

BUT CAO CAO
HAD ALREADY
DRAWN HIS
LAST BREATH


YOUR
HIGHNESS!


YOUR HIGH-NESS!
YOUR HIGH-NESS!
ONLY AFTER HIS DEATH, COULD THE FULL EXTENT OF CAO CAO'S GREAT-NESS BE REALIZED. TRUE, HE HAD HIS SHORTCOMINGS, BUT THEY WERE FAR OUTWEIGHED BY HIS STRENGTHS. NO ORDINARY MAN COULD HAVE SUBJUGATED TWO-THIRDS OF THE REALM IN SUCH A CHAOTIC ERA. IN THIS RESPECT, HE WAS THE KIND OF HERO BORN ONLY IN TROUBLED TIMES, A KIND OF HERO BORN ONLY ONCE A CENTURY, OR PERHAPS ONCE A MILLENIUM.


THE MOURNING
FUNERARY
PROCESSION
CARRIED HIS
CORPSE FROM
LUOYANG TO
YEJUN.

NEW KING OF WEI







YES, OF COURSE, BUT THAT DOES NOT CHANGE THE FACT THAT THE REALM WILL BE DESTABILIZED WITHOUT A SPEEDY SUCCESSION. WE MUST TAKE CARE OF THE MATTER AT ONCE.

CONSIDERING HOW GREAT OF A FATHER HE LOST, HIS LENGTHY GRIEVING IS NO SURPRISE.

WE CANNOT AFFORD TO SIMPLY WAIT! HIS HIGHNESS HAS FOUR ADULT SONS, WHO WILL NO DOUBT QUARREL OVER WHO SHOULD SUCCEED IF THIS MATTER ISN'T RESOLVED AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

BUT AS HIS HIGHNESS HAS PASSED AWAY OUTSIDE OF THE CAPITAL, THE EMPEROR HAS YET TO ISSUE A MANDATE FOR SUCCESSION.

BUT... IF WE CARRY OUT THE SUCCESSION BEFORE OBTAINING THE MANDATE FROM THE EMPEROR, THE OTHER 3 SONS MAY OBJECT.

THERE WILL BE A VIOLENT FAMILY FEUD IF WE DO NOT CARRY OUT THE LATE KING'S WILL AT ONCE!

HUA XIN?

IF IT'S THE EMPEROR'S MANDATE WE NEED, THEN I HAVE IT RIGHT HERE!

AHH!

THE IMPERIAL COURT BARELY HAS THE ABILITY TO GOVERN THE REALM, AND YET YOU THINK WE SHOULD SIMPLY WAIT UNTIL IT ISSUES THE MANDATE!? THAT IS WHY I HAVE GONE TO XUCHANG TO DEMAND ONE MYSELF! I HOLD IT NOW HERE BEFORE YOU.

CORRECT. LET US CARRY OUT THE CEREMONY TOMORROW IF POSSIBLE.

AH, I ASSUME IT HAS CAO PI'S NEW RANK AND OFFICE?


THE NEXT DAY, CAO PI WAS CROWNED KING OF WEI, CHANCELLOR OF HAN, AND PROTECTOR OF JIZHOU. THE DATE WAS THE SECOND MONTH OF THE 25TH YEAR OF REBUILT TRANQUILITY (220 AD)

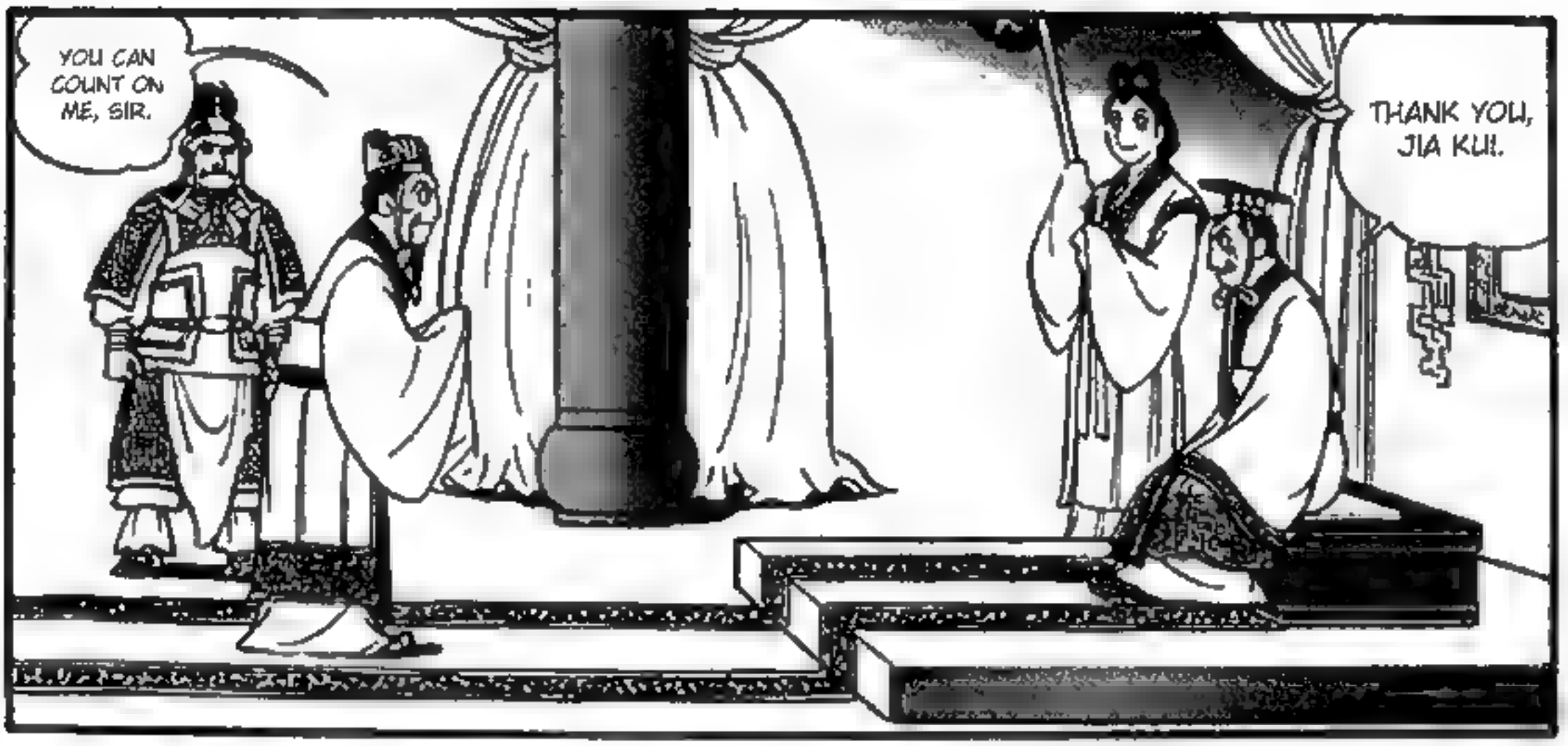
BUT DURING THE CELEBRATION, AN URGENT REPORT REACHED THE WEI PALACE AT YEJUN

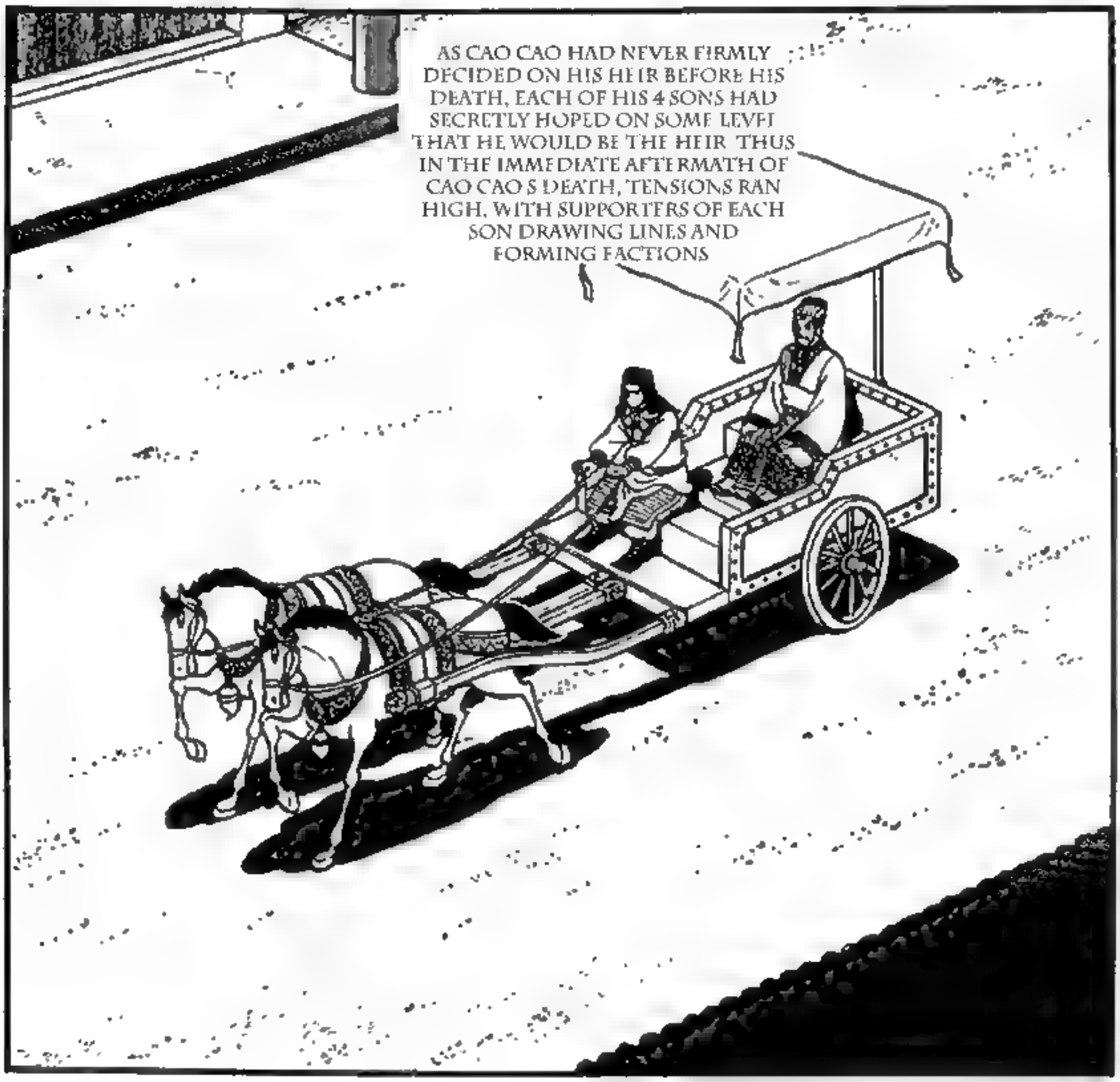
BROTHER ZHANG IS LEADING AN ARMY HERE!?

YOUR HIGHNESS' BROTHER CAO ZHANG, THE LORD OF YANLING, IS MARCHING HERE AT THE HEAD OF A 100,000-STRONG ARMY!

DO NOT WORRY, YOUR HIGHNESS. LET YOUR HUMBLE SERVANT JIA KUI GO QUESTION CAO ZHANG'S TRUE INTENTIONS.

THIS IS QUITE WORRISOME. AMONG MY YOUNGER BROTHERS, ZHANG IS MOST ADEPT IN MARTIAL MATTERS AND HAS ALWAYS BEEN STRONG-HEADED. HE MAY BE COMING TO CONTEND FOR THE THRONE!

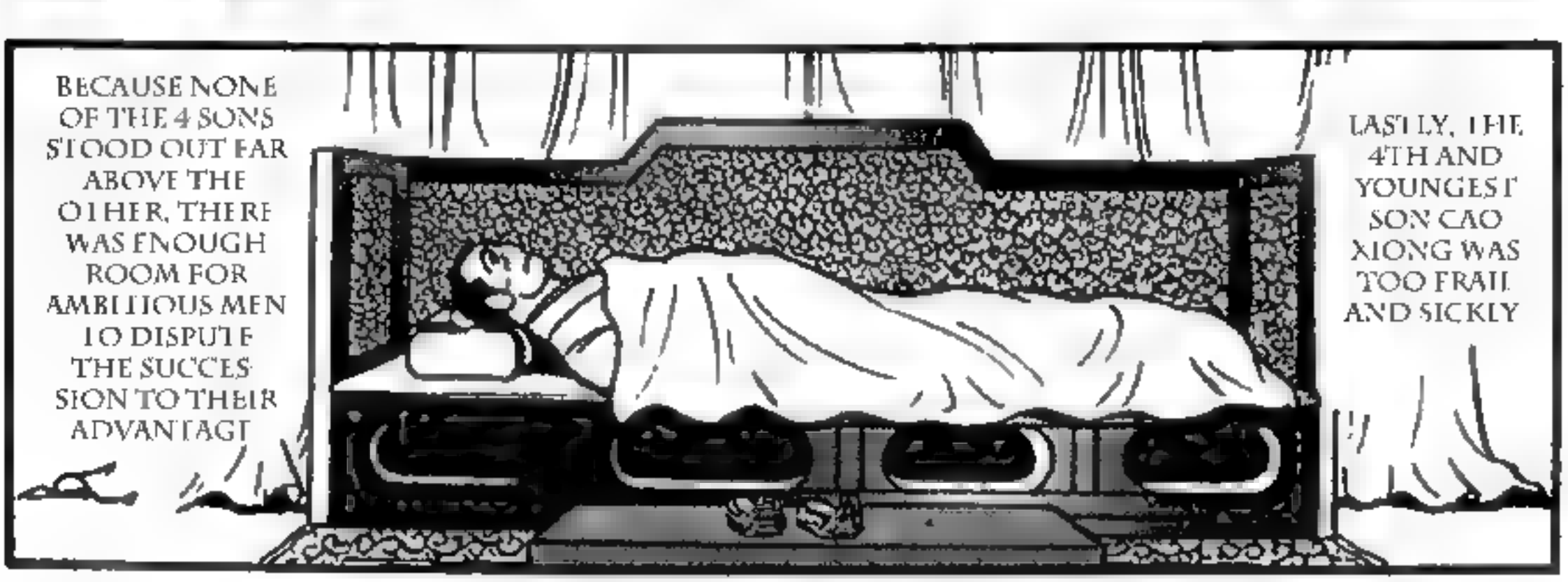

YOU CAN COUNT ON ME, SIR.
THANK YOU, JIA KUI.

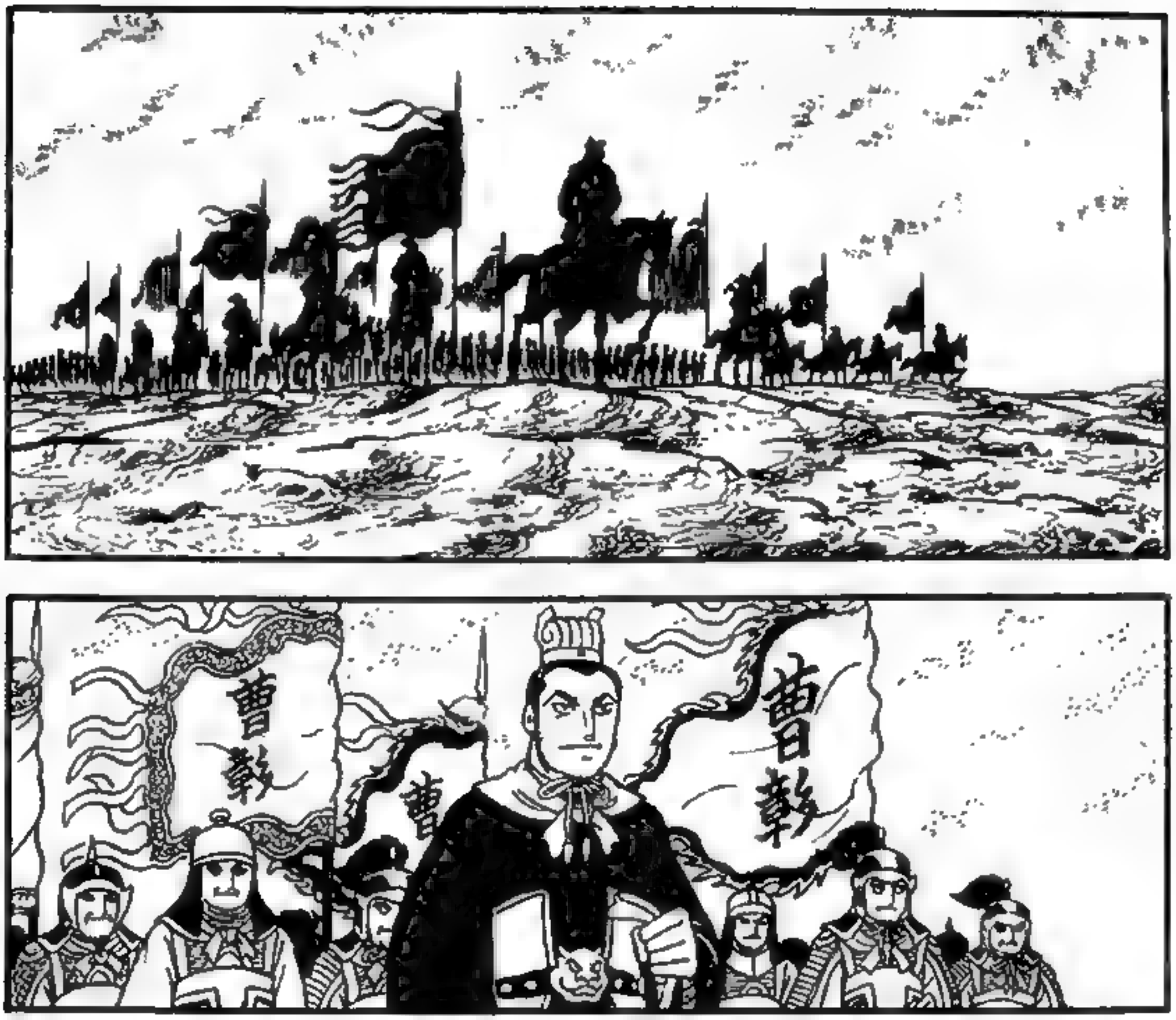
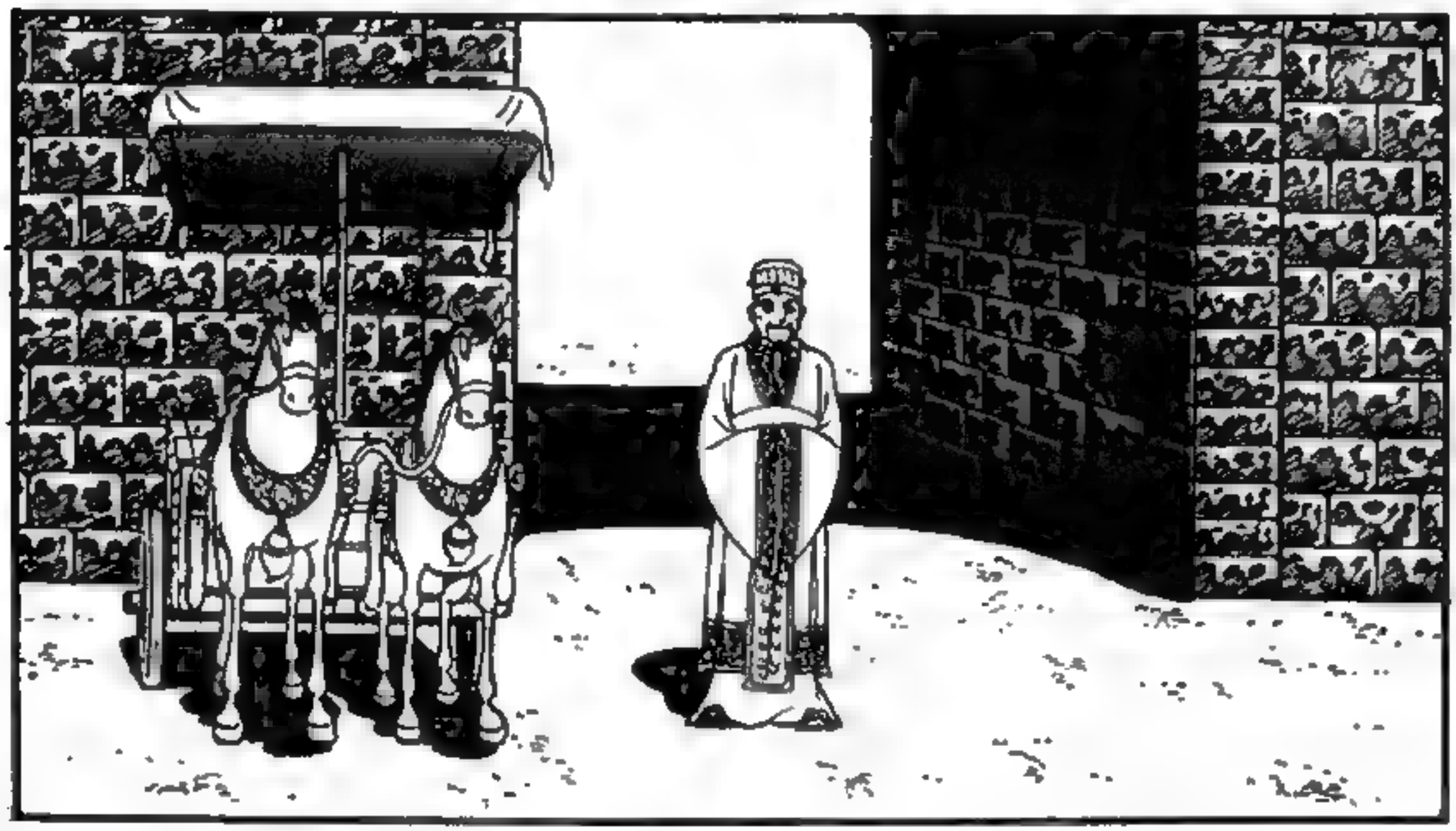

AS CAO CAO HAD NEVER FIRMLY DECIDED ON HIS HEIR BEFORE HIS DEATH, EACH OF HIS 4 SONS HAD SECRETLY HOPED ON SOME LEVEL THAT HE WOULD BE THE HEIR. THUS IN THE IMMEDIATE AFTERMATH OF CAO CAO'S DEATH, TENSIONS RAN HIGH, WITH SUPPORTERS OF EACH SON DRAWING LINES AND FORMING FACTIONS


ALTHOUGH THE ELDEST SON CAO PI APPEARED RATHER PLAIN AT FIRST SIGHT, HIS EARNEST PERSONALITY WITH NO GLARING FLAWS WAS WHY CAO CAO SELECTED HIM AS HIS HEIR


HIS SECOND SON CAO ZHANG WAS BRAVE BUT LACKED THE PRUDENCE NECESSARY FOR A RULER.


AS FOR HIS 3RD SON CAO ZHI, ALTHOUGH HE WAS HIS FATHER'S FAVOURITE, ZHI LEANED TOO HEAVILY TOWARDS THE ARTS AND HIGH CULTURE TO BE SUITABLE FOR A STERN ADMINISTRATIVE ROLE


BECAUSE NONE OF THE 4 SONS STOOD OUT FAR ABOVE THE OTHER, THERE WAS ENOUGH ROOM FOR AMBITIOUS MEN TO DISPUTE THE SUCCESSION TO THEIR ADVANTAGE
LASTLY, THE 4TH AND YOUNGEST SON CAO XIONG WAS TOO FRAIL AND SICKLY


曹教
曹教
曹教


WHERE IS THE LATE KING'S SEAL, IF I MAY ASK?

YOU MUST BE HERE TO WELCOME ME.

JUST AS EVERY FAMILY HAS ITS ELDEST SON, EVERY STATE HAS ITS APPOINTED HEIR. THE LOCATION OF THE SEAL IS NOT SOMETHING YOU NEED CONCERN YOURSELF WITH.

OUT OF WHAT INTENTIONS DOES THE LORD OF YANLING ASK SUCH A QUESTION?

NOW IF I MAY ASK YOU A QUESTION, HAVE YOU COME TO PAY YOUR RESPECTS TO THE LATE KING, OR HAVE YOU COME TO DISPUTE THE SUCCESSION?

THEN WHY HAVE YOU COME AT THE HEAD OF SUCH A LARGE ARMY?

I... I HAVE NO INTENTION OF FIGHTING OVER THE THRONE! I AM MERELY HERE TO ATTEND MY LATE FATHER'S FUNERAL.

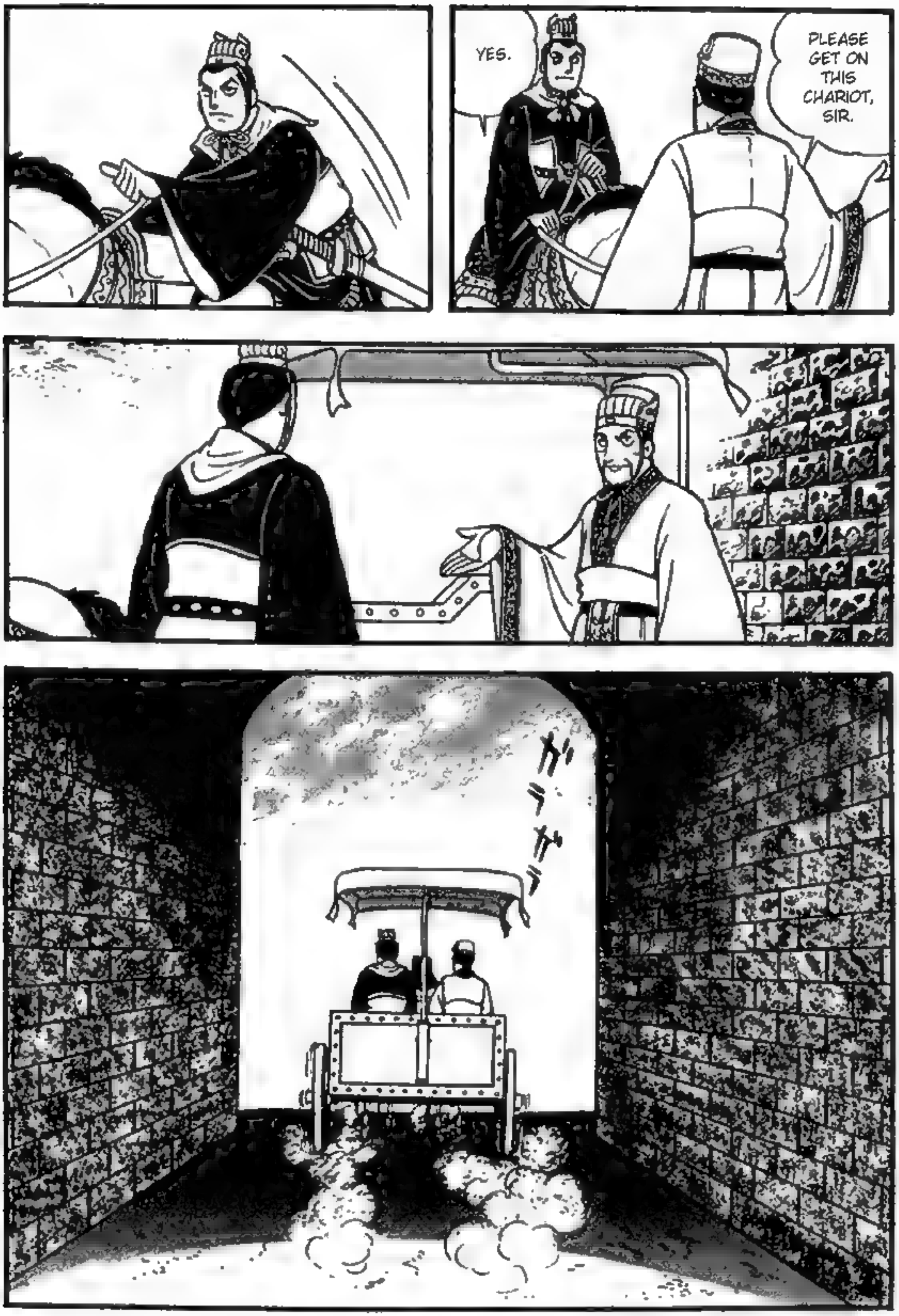
RIGHT, OF COURSE.

IF YOU WERE TO MARCH IN THE CITY WITH YOUR SOLDIERS, THE KING AND ALL HIS SUBJECTS WILL SURELY DOUBT YOUR MOTIVES.

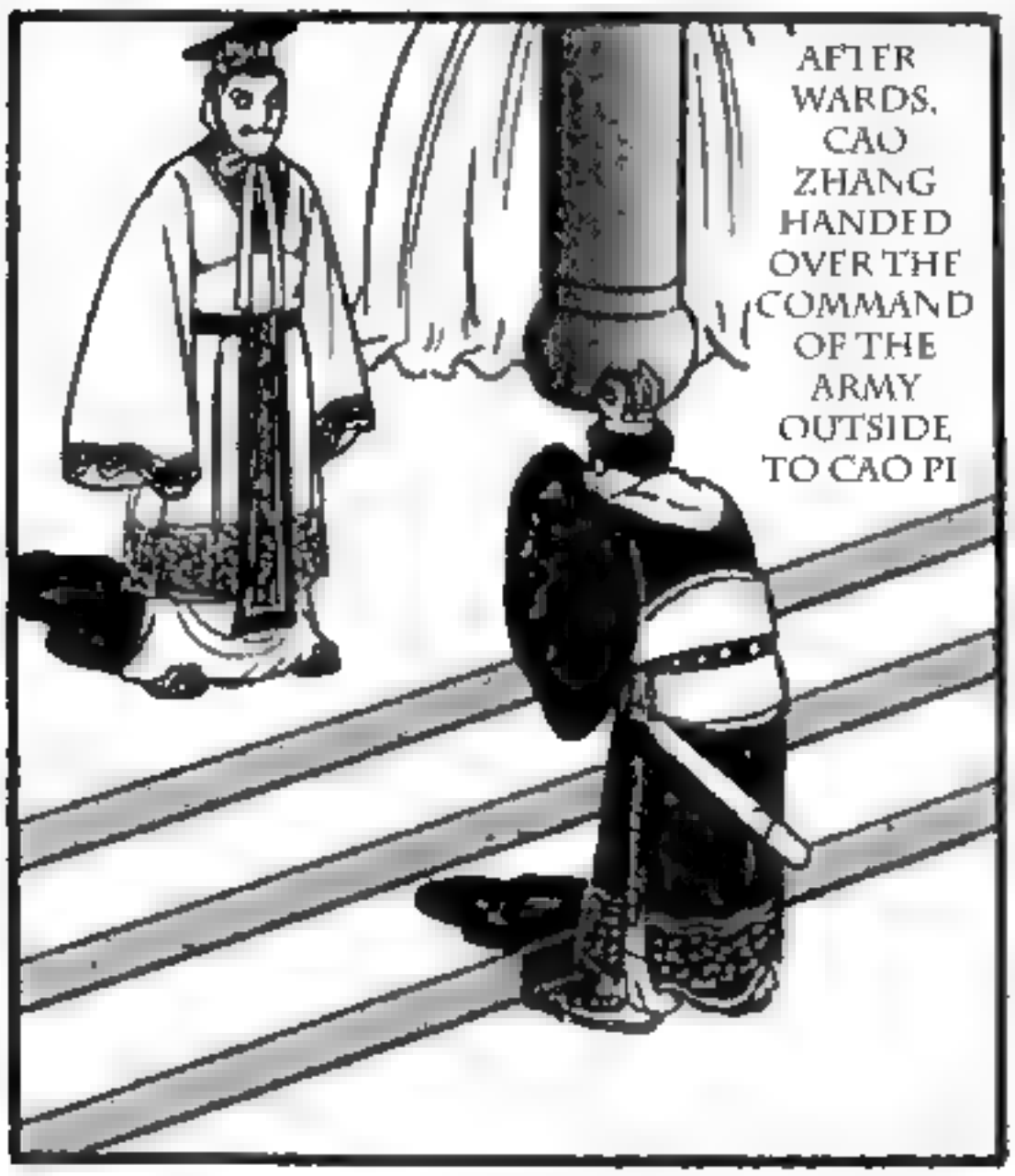
VERY WELL, YOU MEN ARE TO STAND BY OUTSIDE. I WILL GO ALONE TO ATTEND THE FUNERAL.

GLADLY.

THERE, NOW LEAD THE WAY.


YES.
PLEASE GET ON THIS CHARIOT, SIR.


CAO ZHANG ENTERED THE PALACE ALONE AND MET HIS BROTHER CAO PI


AFTER WARDS, CAO ZHANG HANDED OVER THE COMMAND OF THE ARMY OUTSIDE TO CAO PI


THE TWO JOINED HANDS AND WEPT FOR THEIR LATE FATHER


CAO ZHANG THEN RETURNED TO YANLING WITH ONLY A MODEST NUMBER OF ESCORTS

WITH HIS ASCENSION CONFIRMED, CAO PI CHANGED THE ERA OF THE EMPIRE FROM THE 25TH YEAR OF REBUILT TRANQUILITY TO THE 1ST YEAR OF PROLONGED WEALTH

AND WANG LANG HIS GRAND SECRETARY

JIA XU HIS GRAND COMMANDANT,

FOR HIS THREE EXCELLENCIES, HUA XIN WAS MADE CHANCELLOR,



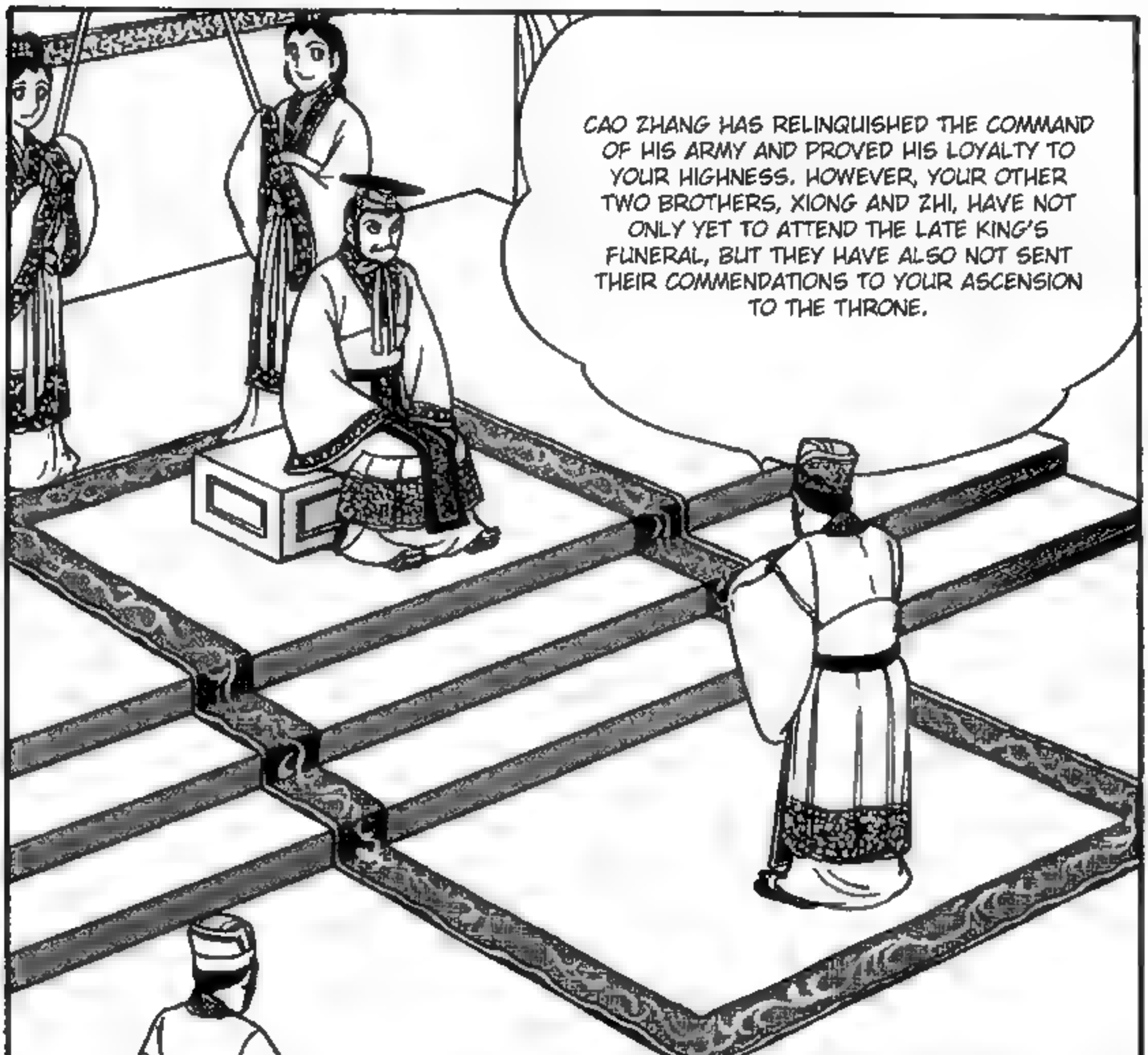




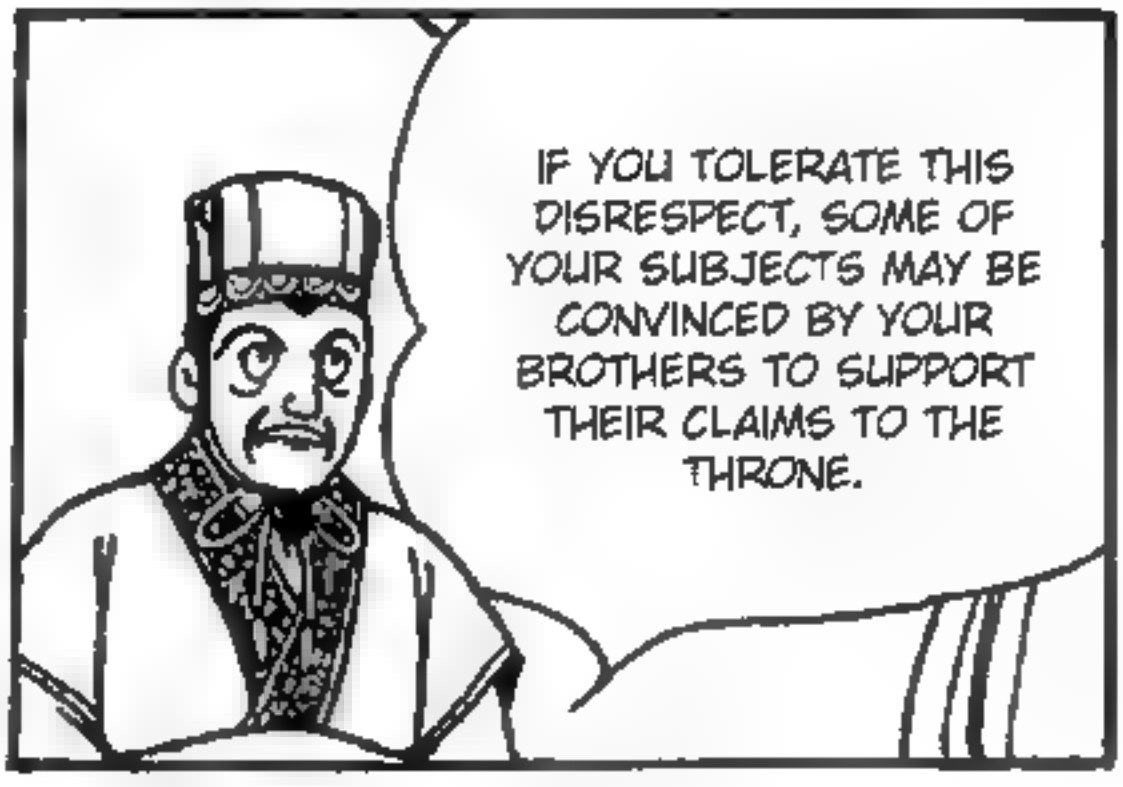
*INSTEAD OF A NUMERICALLY ASCENDING YEAR SYSTEM, PRE-MODERN EAST ASIAN POLITIES USED ERAS NAMED AND CHOSEN BY THEIR MONARCHS. MODERN JAPAN STILL USES THE ERA SYSTEM (EX. SHOWA 1926-1989, HEISEI 1989-PRESENT)

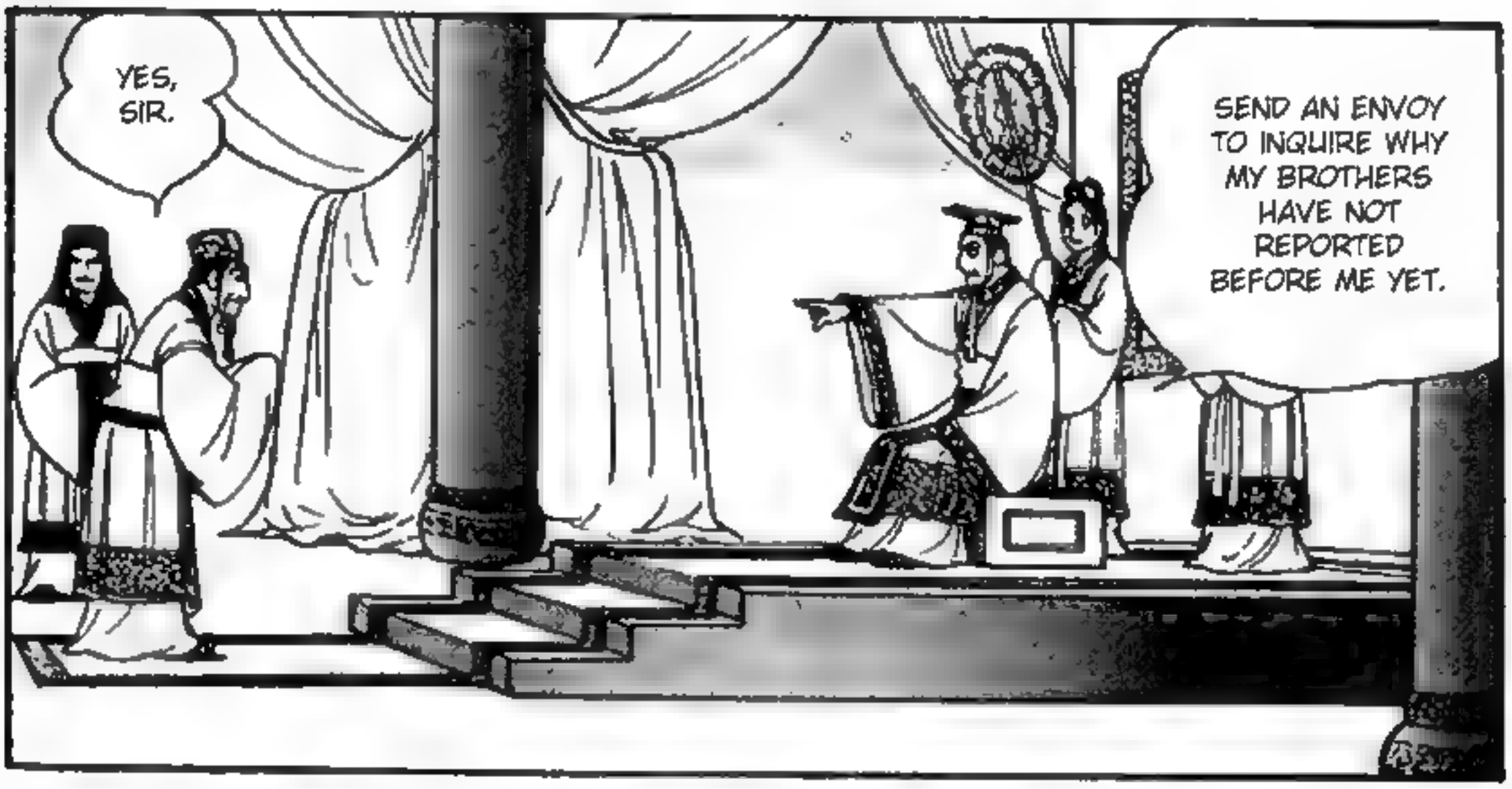
*THREE EXCELLENCIES: THREE HIGHEST RANKING POSTS IN GOVERNMENT

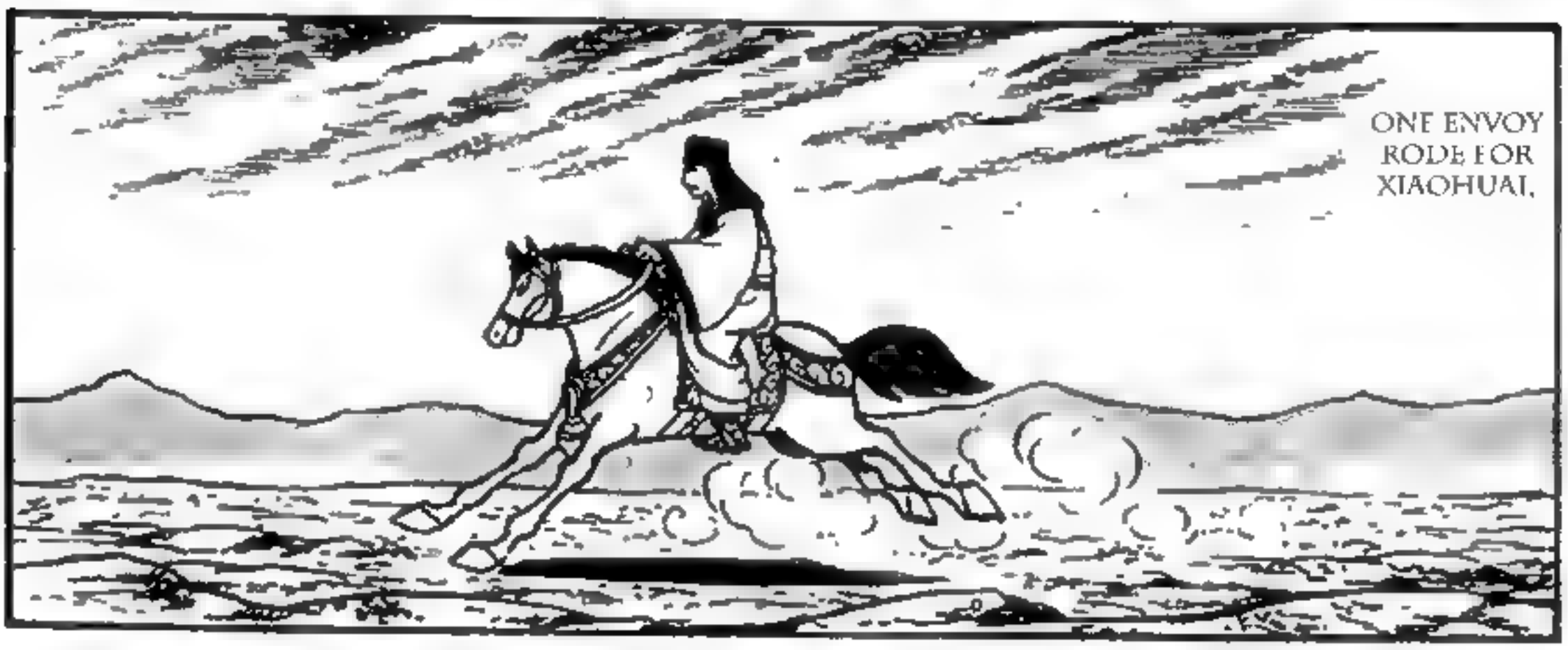
FRATERNAL CONFLICT

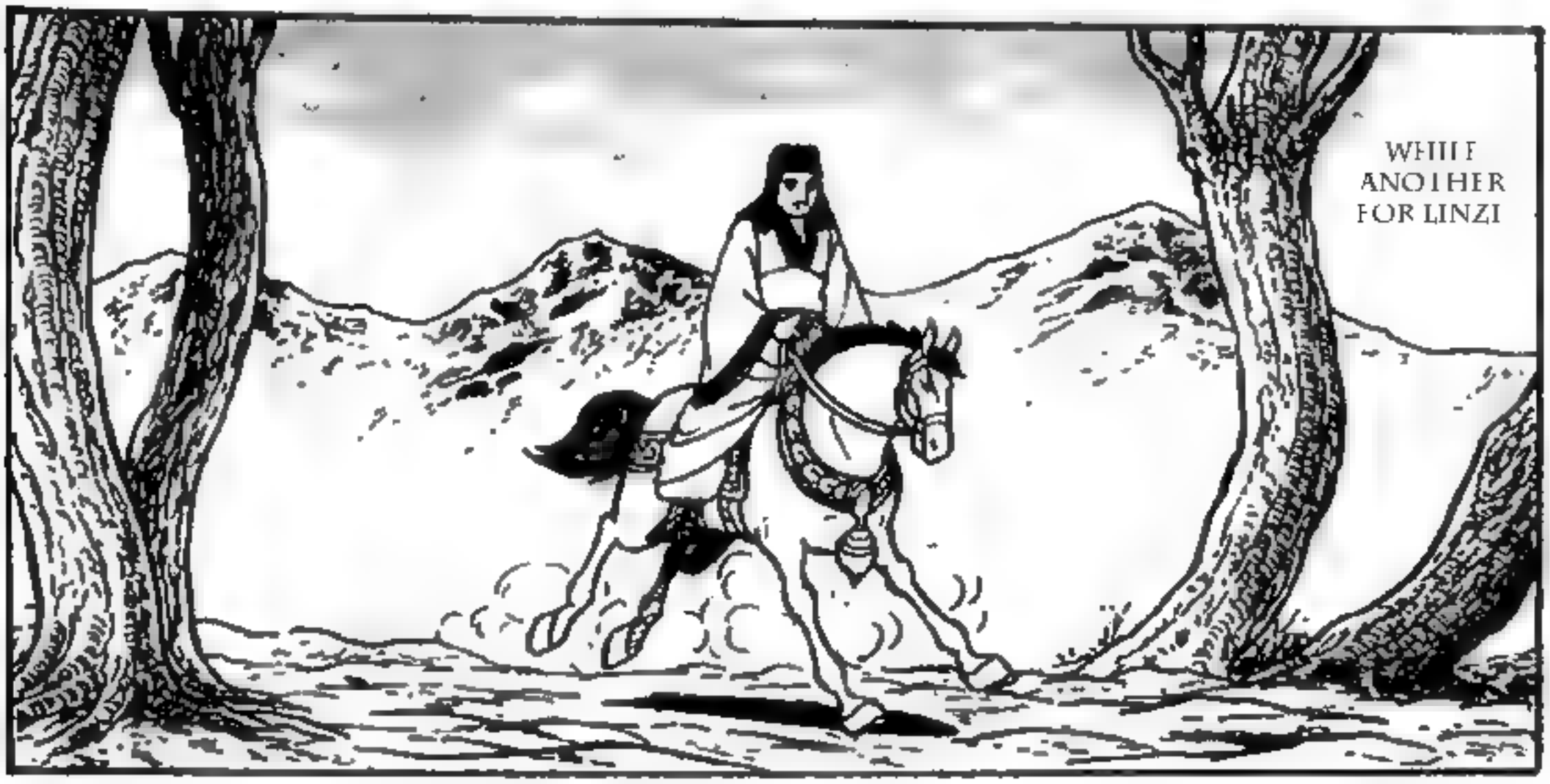

CAO ZHANG HAS RELINQUISHED THE COMMAND OF HIS ARMY AND PROVED HIS LOYALTY TO YOUR HIGHNESS. HOWEVER, YOUR OTHER TWO BROTHERS, XIONG AND ZHI, HAVE NOT ONLY YET TO ATTEND THE LATE KING'S FUNERAL, BUT THEY HAVE ALSO NOT SENT THEIR COMMENDATIONS TO YOUR ASCENSION TO THE THRONE.

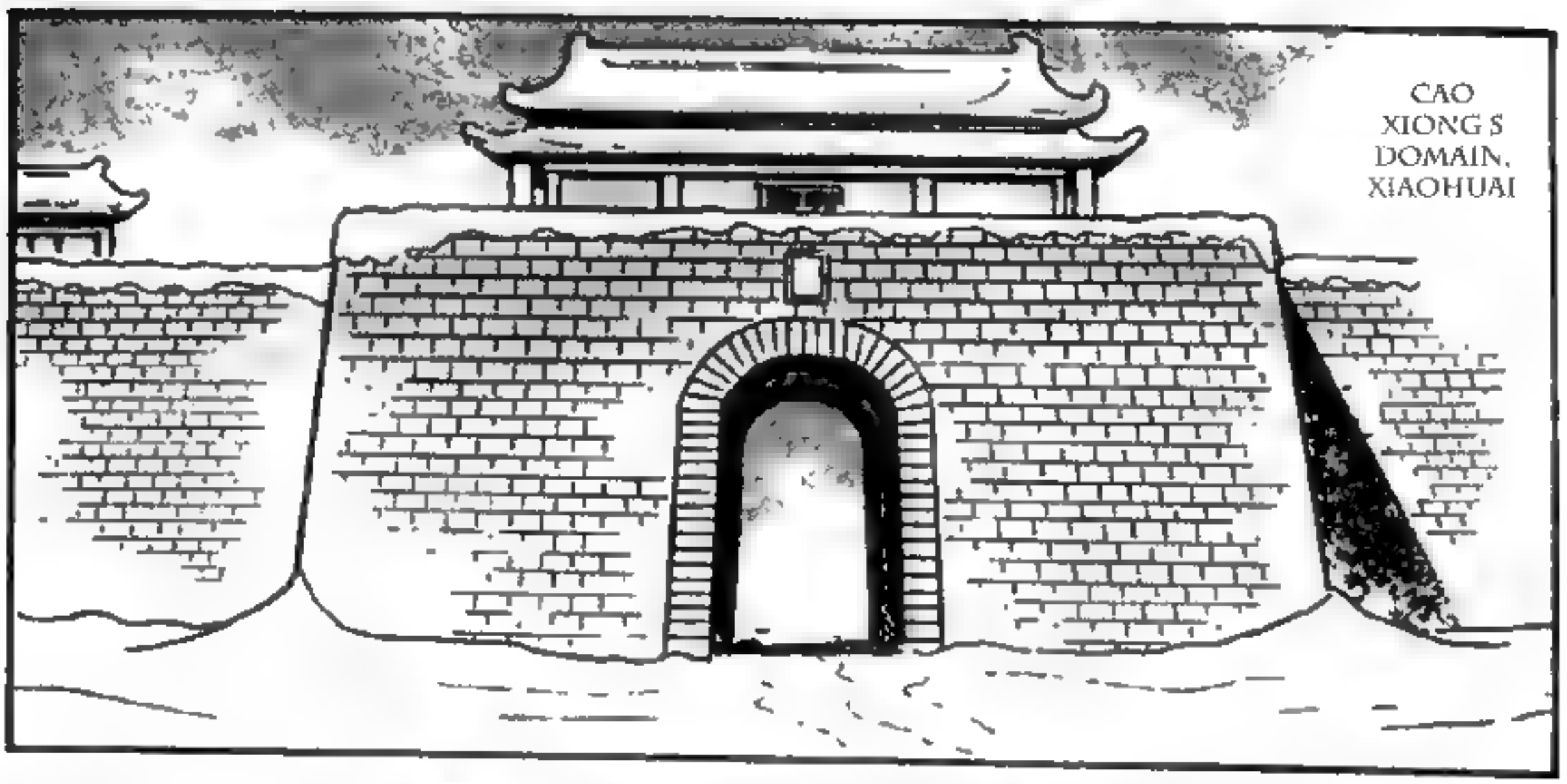


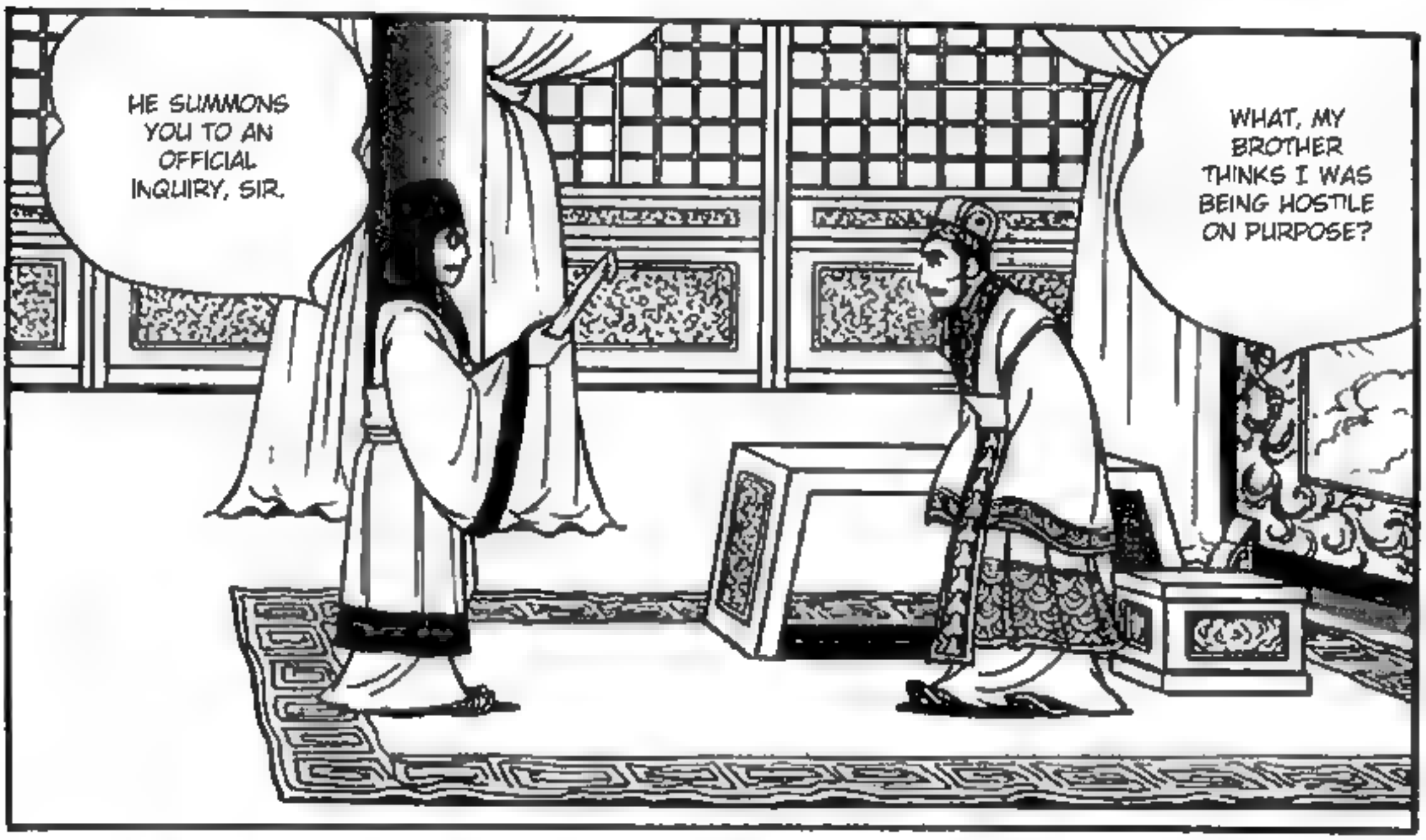

IF YOU TOLERATE THIS DISRESPECT, SOME OF YOUR SUBJECTS MAY BE CONVINCED BY YOUR BROTHERS TO SUPPORT THEIR CLAIMS TO THE THRONE.


YES, SIR.
SEND AN ENVOY TO INQUIRE WHY MY BROTHERS HAVE NOT REPORTED BEFORE ME YET.

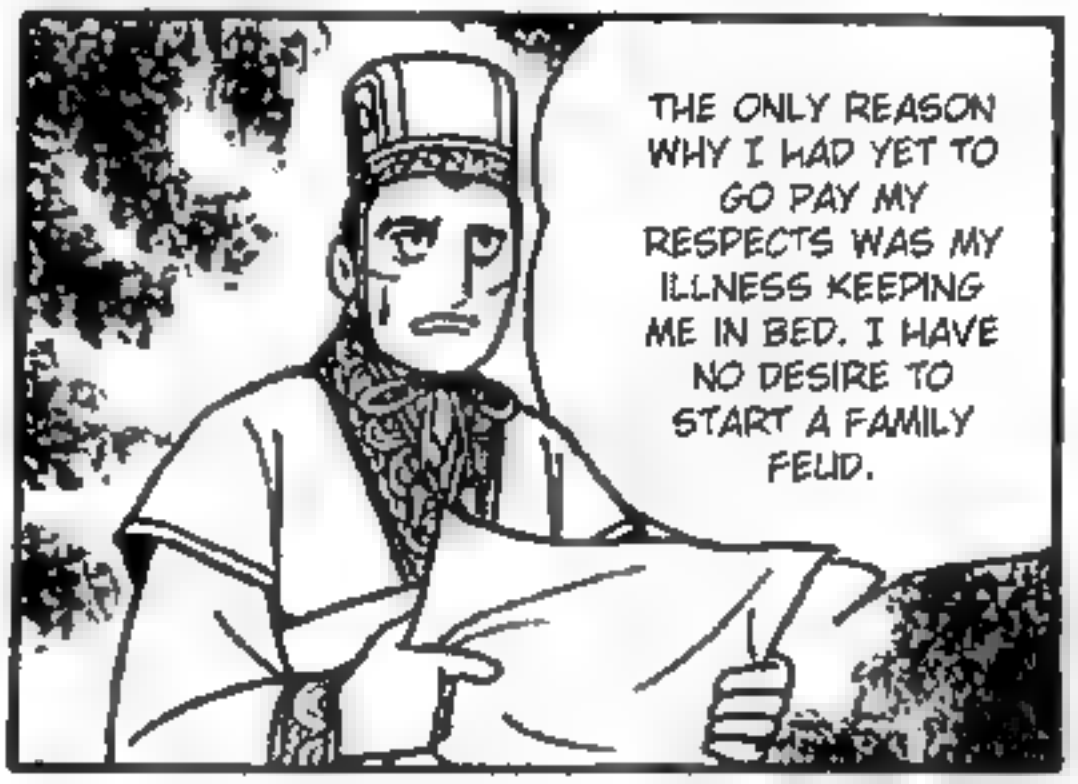

ONE ENVOY RODE FOR XIAOHUAI,


WHILE ANOTHER FOR LINZI


CAO XIONG'S DOMAIN, XIAOHUAI


HE SUMMONS YOU TO AN OFFICIAL INQUIRY, SIR.
WHAT, MY BROTHER THINKS I WAS BEING HOSTILE ON PURPOSE?


BUT IT SEEMS MY BROTHER IS ALREADY SET ON CONVICTING ME ON THE SLIGHTEST CHARGES... I DOUBT HE WILL ACCEPT MY EXCUSES...


THE ONLY REASON WHY I HAD YET TO GO PAY MY RESPECTS WAS MY ILLNESS KEEPING ME IN BED. I HAVE NO DESIRE TO START A FAMILY FEUD.

THE ENVOY RODE BACK TO RELAY THIS SHOCKING TURN OF EVENTS TO CAO PI

THE FRAIL AND WEAK-WILLED CAO XIONG, ALREADY DEPRESSED FROM HIS FATHER'S PASSING, COMMITTED SUICIDE RATHER THAN FACE HIS BROTHER'S WRATH.

YES, SIR.

I SEE... I COMMITTED A GREAT ERR BY LACKING COMPASSION. PLEASE BURY MY LATE BROTHER XIONG WITH HONOURS.

CAO ZHI'S DOMAIN, LINZI

WHAT!? I'M TO BE SUMMONED FOR A HEARING!?

OUR LORD WAS CLEARLY THE FAVOURITE SON. THERE MUST HAVE BEEN TREASONOUS SUBJECTS WHO PLOTTED TO PLACE CAO PI ON THE THRONE INSTEAD!

IT HASN'T EVEN BEEN A WEEK SINCE THE FORMER KING'S PASSING, AND CAO PI IS ALREADY ATTEMPTING TO CHARGE HIS BROTHERS!?

HE IS INCOMPARABLE TO THAT DULL-WITTED SIMPLETON WHO CURRENTLY SITS ON THE WEI THRONE! ARE YOU SO BLIND AS TO NOT RECOGNISE THE TRUE KING BEFORE YOUR EYES!?

THERE IS NO ONE MORE FIT TO BE KING THAN OUR LORD, ONE OF THE FOREMOST INTELLECTS OF OUR AGE! LYRICAL POEMS SPRING FROM HIS MIND AS WATER FROM A FOUNTAIN.

NO, THERE'S NO NEED TO GO THAT FAR. BUT GET OUT FROM MY SIGHT THIS INSTANT!

MY LORD, SHALL I CUT THIS ENVOY'S HEAD!?

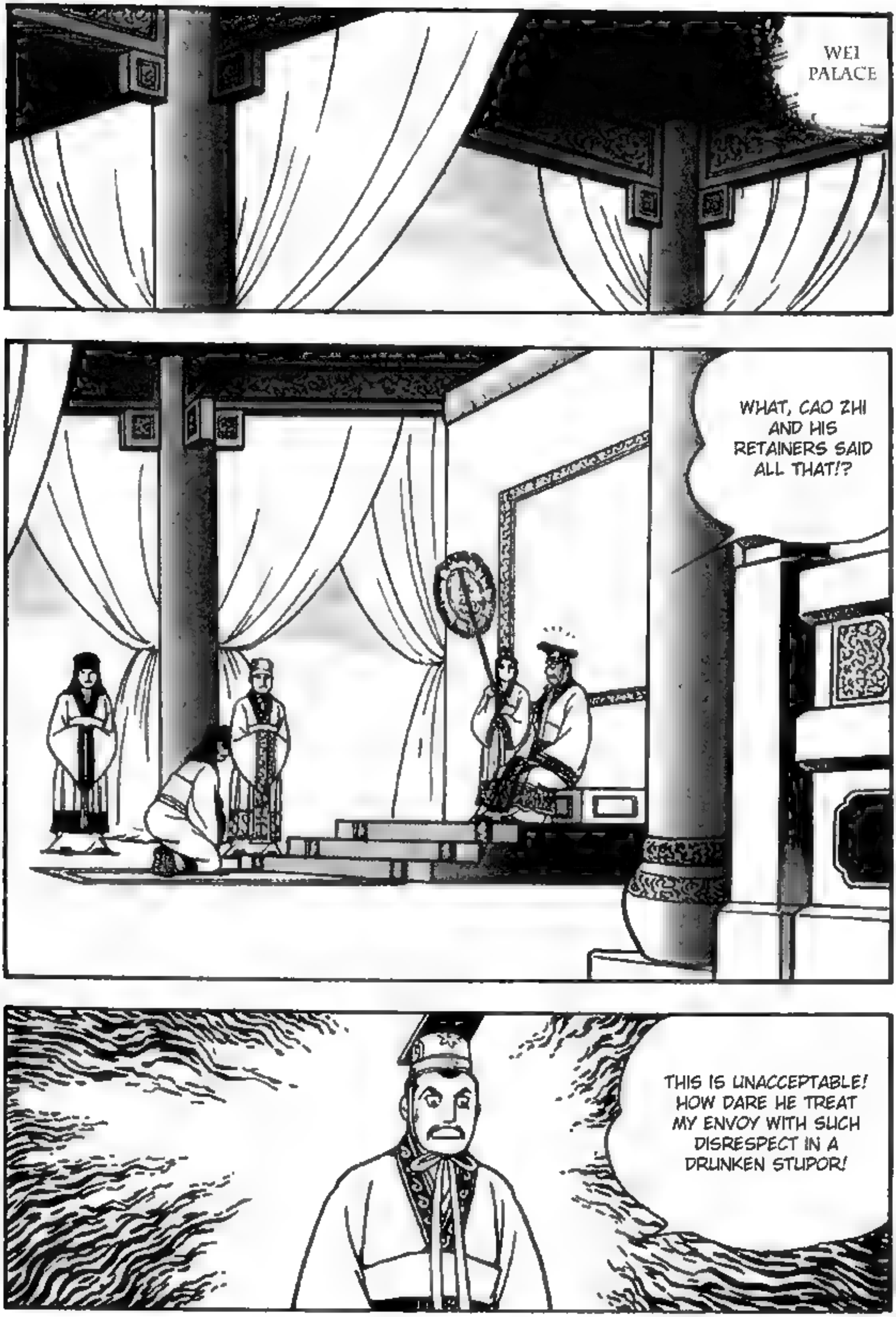
Y-YES, SIR!

YOU HEARD MY LORD! SCRAM!

THE ENVOY FRANTIC-ALLY RODE BACK TO CAO PI

YES, YES.

HAHAHA! ALL MY LORD HAS TO DO IS ACT, AND THE PEOPLE OF THIS REALM WILL SURELY SUPPORT YOUR CLAIM TO THE THRONE.


WEI PALACE
WHAT, CAO ZHI AND HIS RETAINERS SAID ALL THAT!?
THIS IS UNACCEPTABLE! HOW DARE HE TREAT MY ENVOY WITH SUCH DISRESPECT IN A DRUNKEN STUPOR!

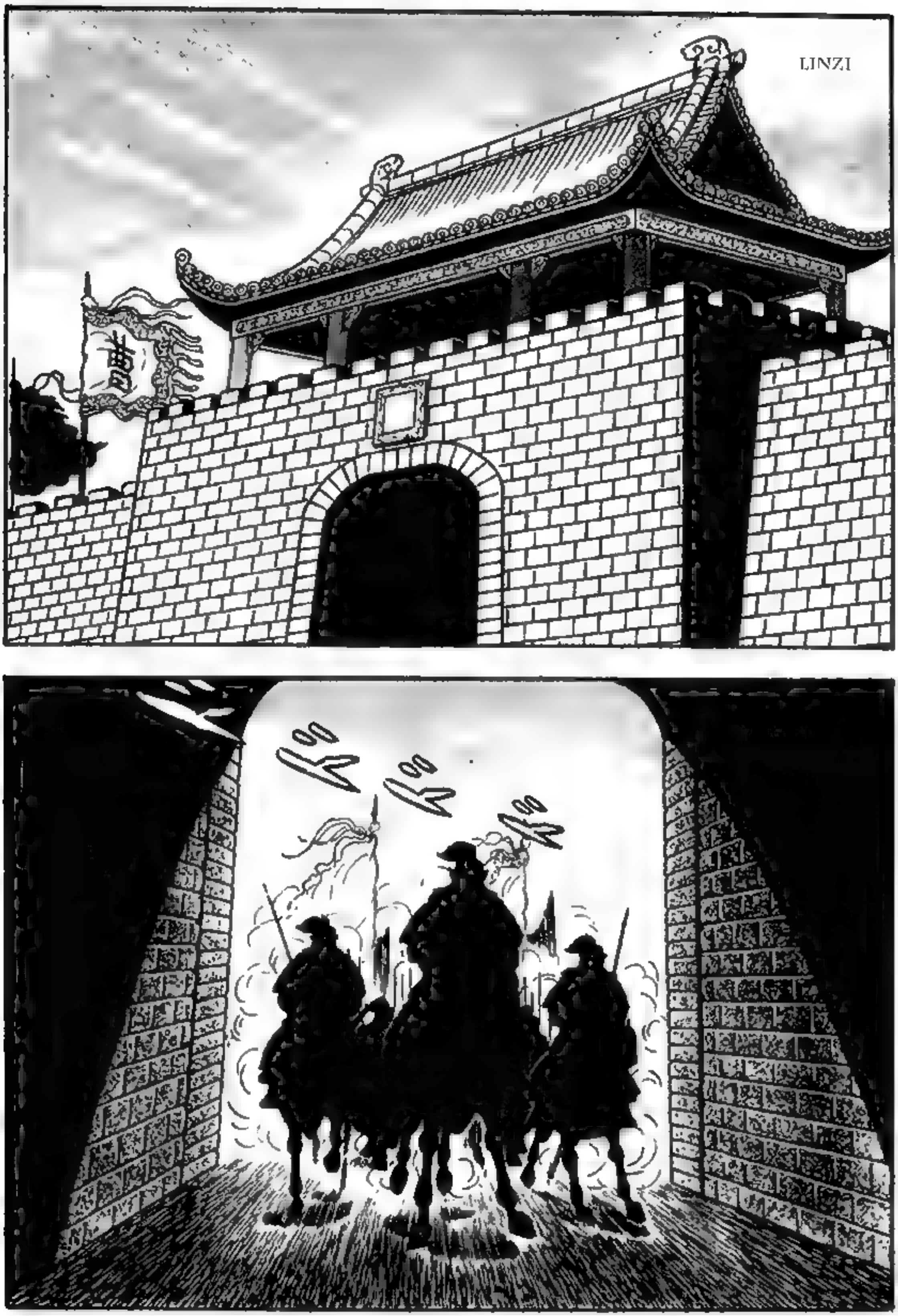
YES?

XU CHU!

YES, SIR.

HEAD TO LINZI AT ONCE AND ARREST CAO ZHI!

TAKING 3000 ELITE PALACE GUARDS, XU CHU QUICKLY RODE TOWARDS LINZI



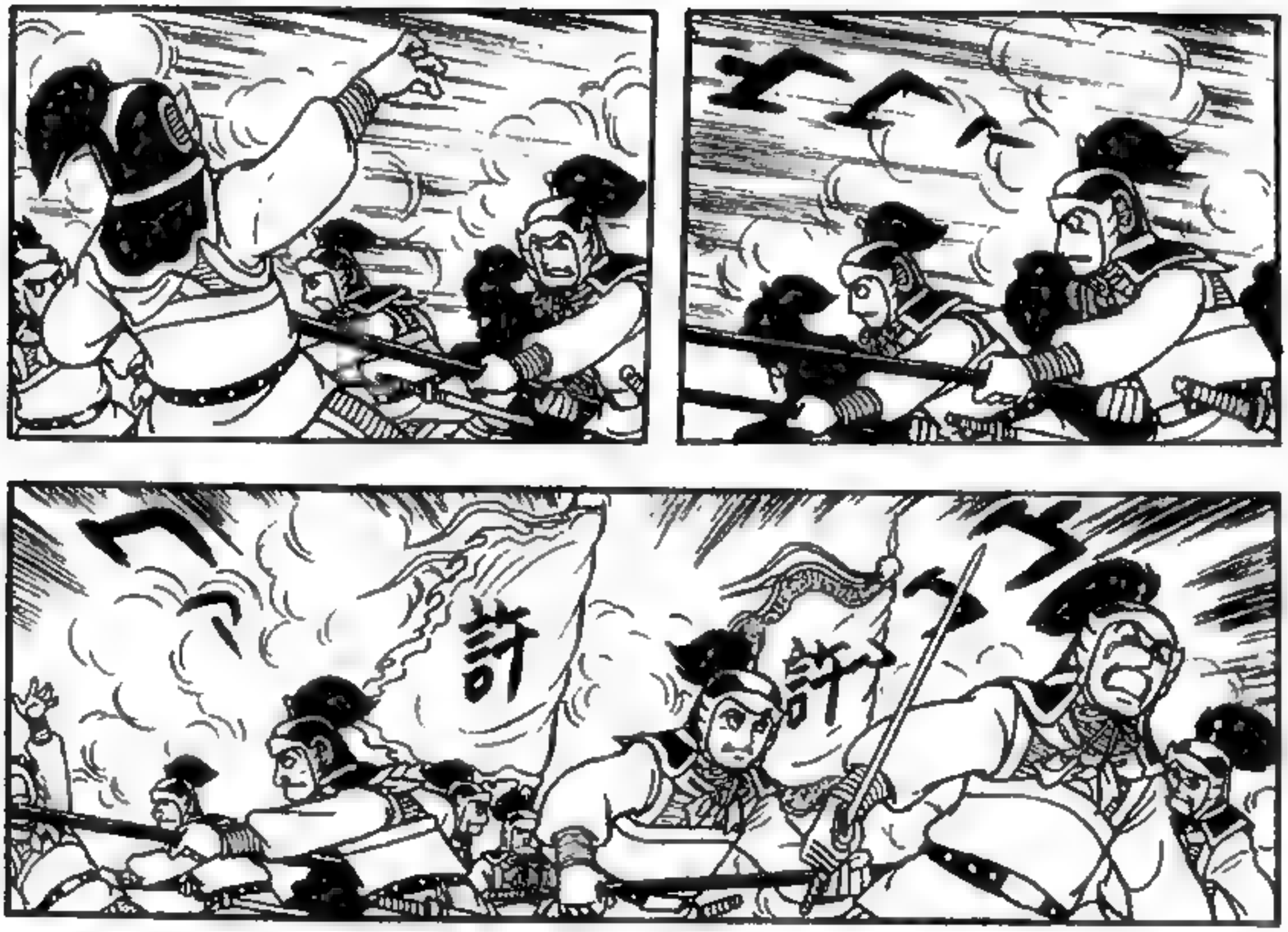
HALT! WHO GOES THERE!?

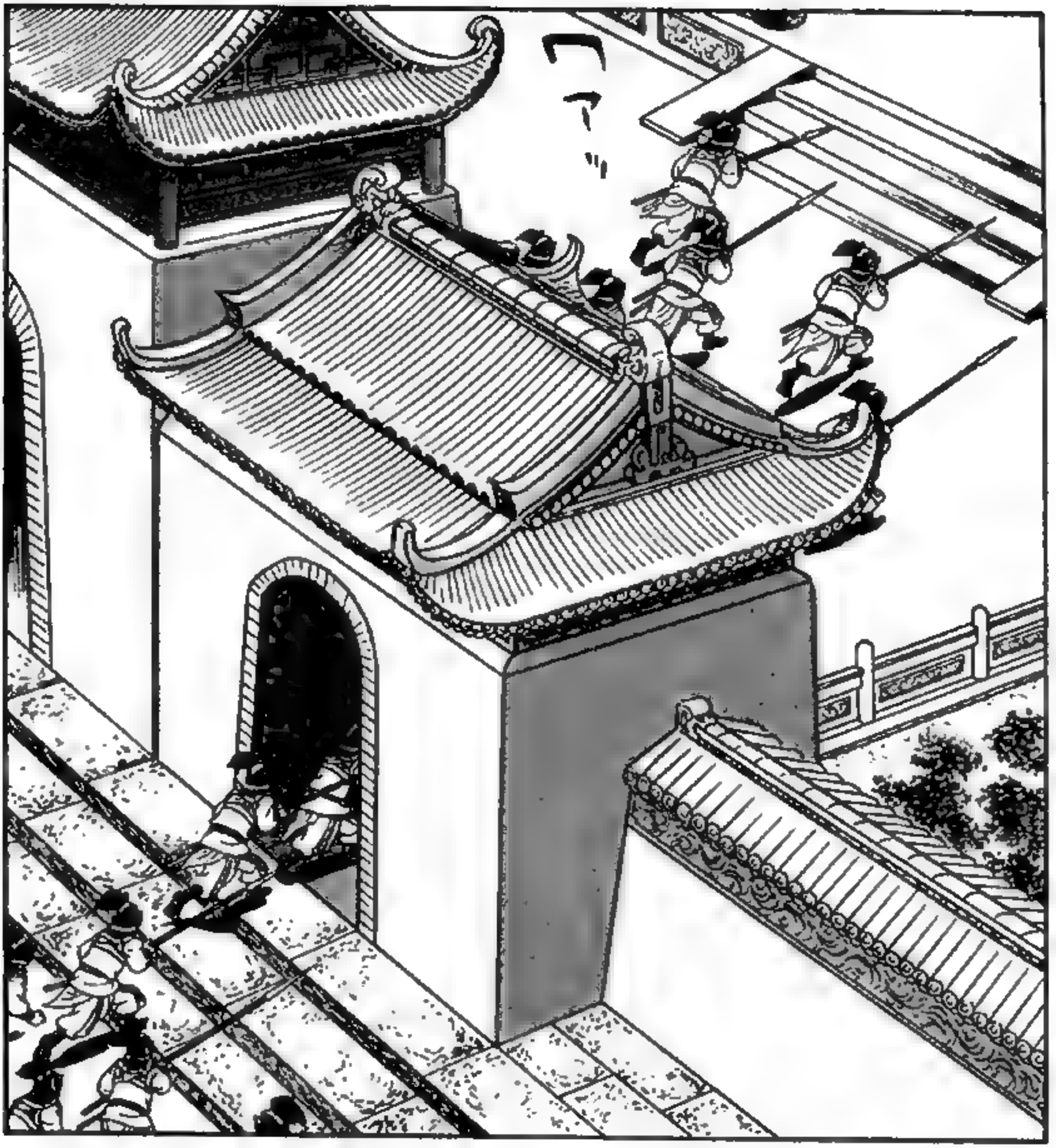
I'M AFRAID WE CANNOT PERMIT YOU TO ENTER HERE ARMED. WAIT HERE WHILE I REPORT YOUR ARRIVAL TO MY LORD FIRST.

WE ARE THE KING'S PERSONAL GUARDS! NOW CLEAR THE WAY!

WHAT!?

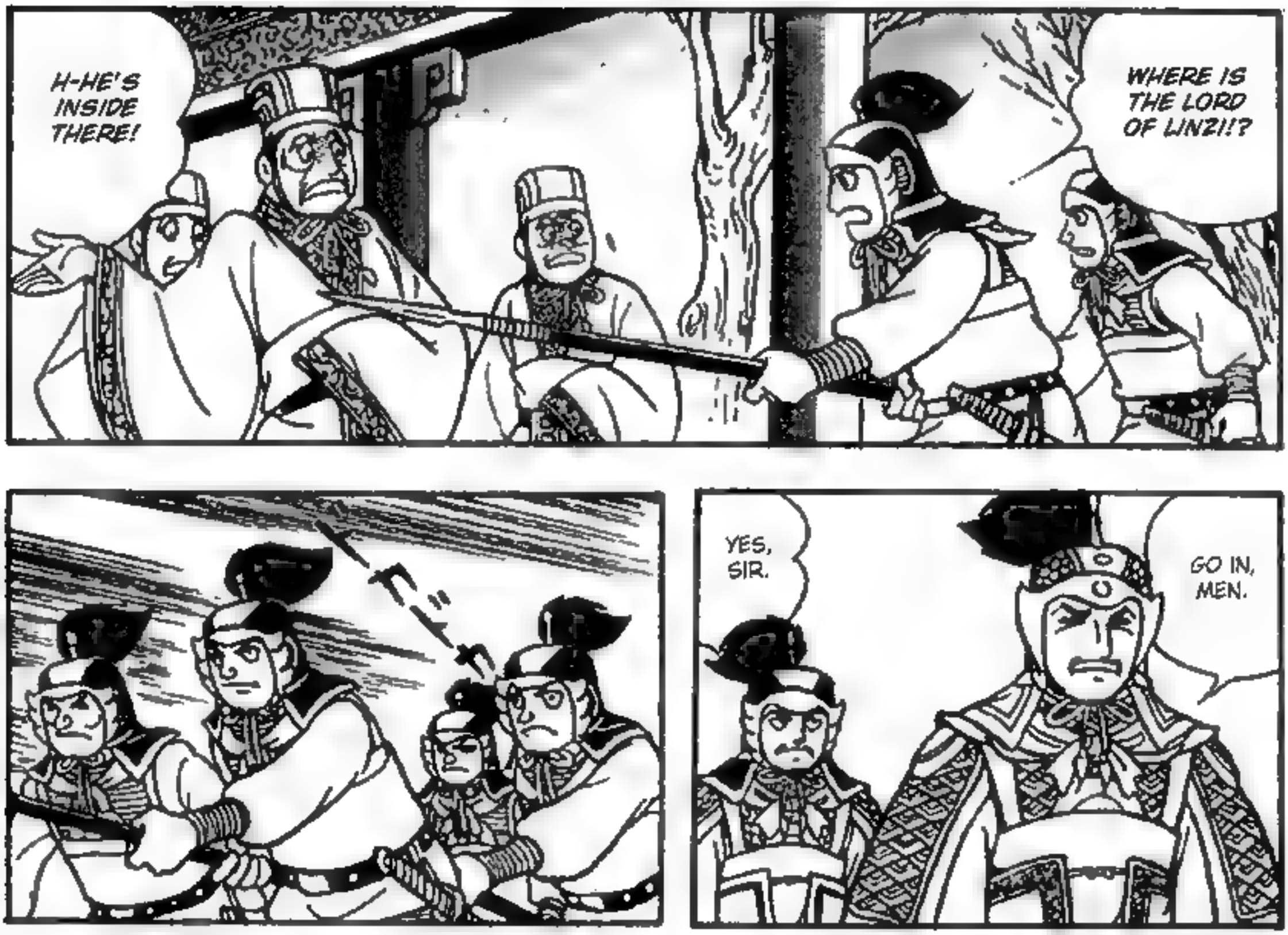
KILL THESE TREA-SONOUS SCUM!


許
許
許




W-WHAT IS THE MEANING OF THIS!?


KYAA!


H-HE'S INSIDE THERE!
WHERE IS THE LORD OF LINZI!?
YES, SIR.
GO IN, MEN.
THERE HE IS!



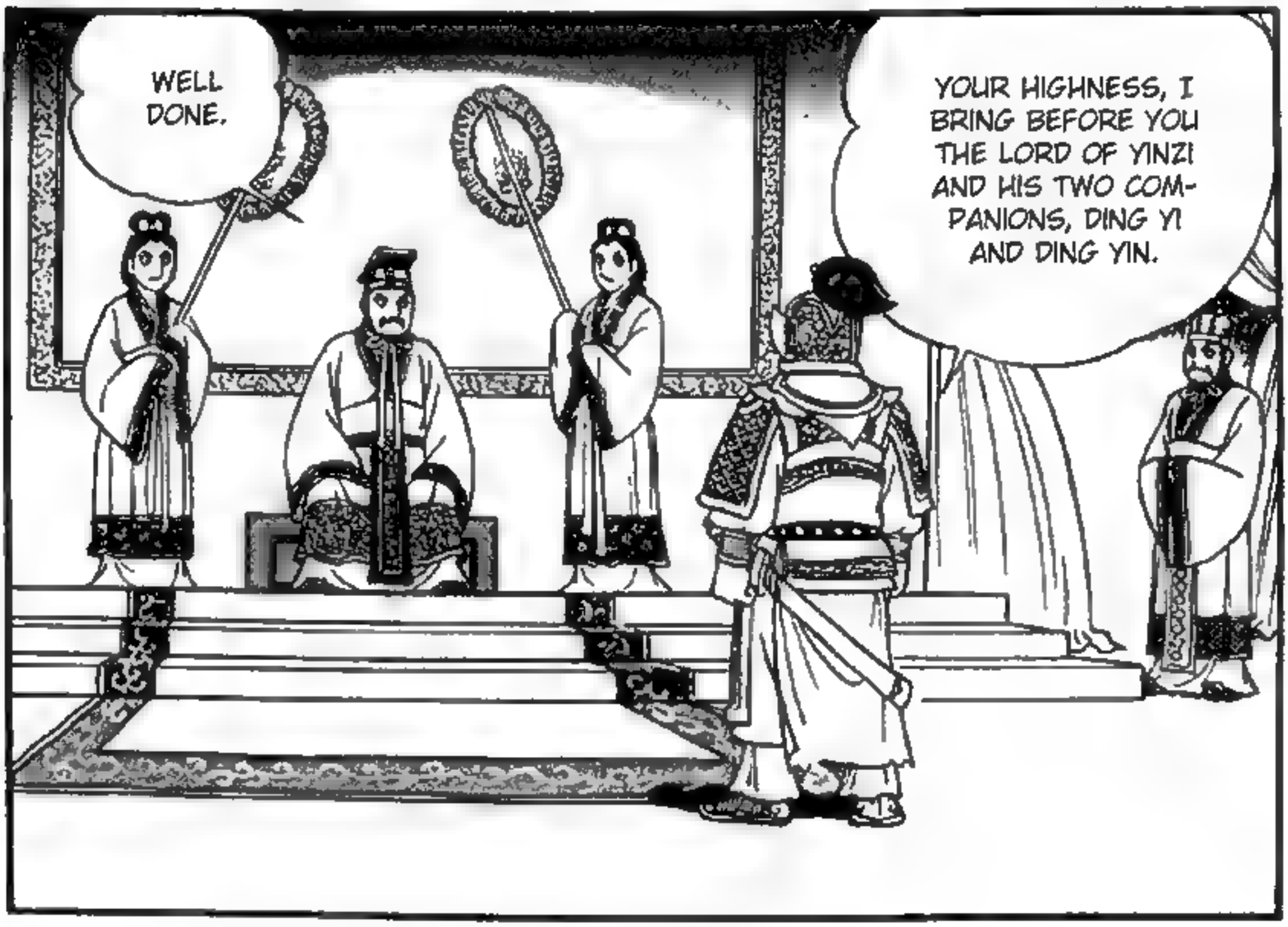

TIE HIM UP!


MN... WHA... WHAT'S GOING ON...?
W-WHAT'RE YOU D-


I AM HERE TO TAKE YOU TO THE WEI PALACE ON THE NEW KING'S ORDERS.

POEM IN SEVEN PACES











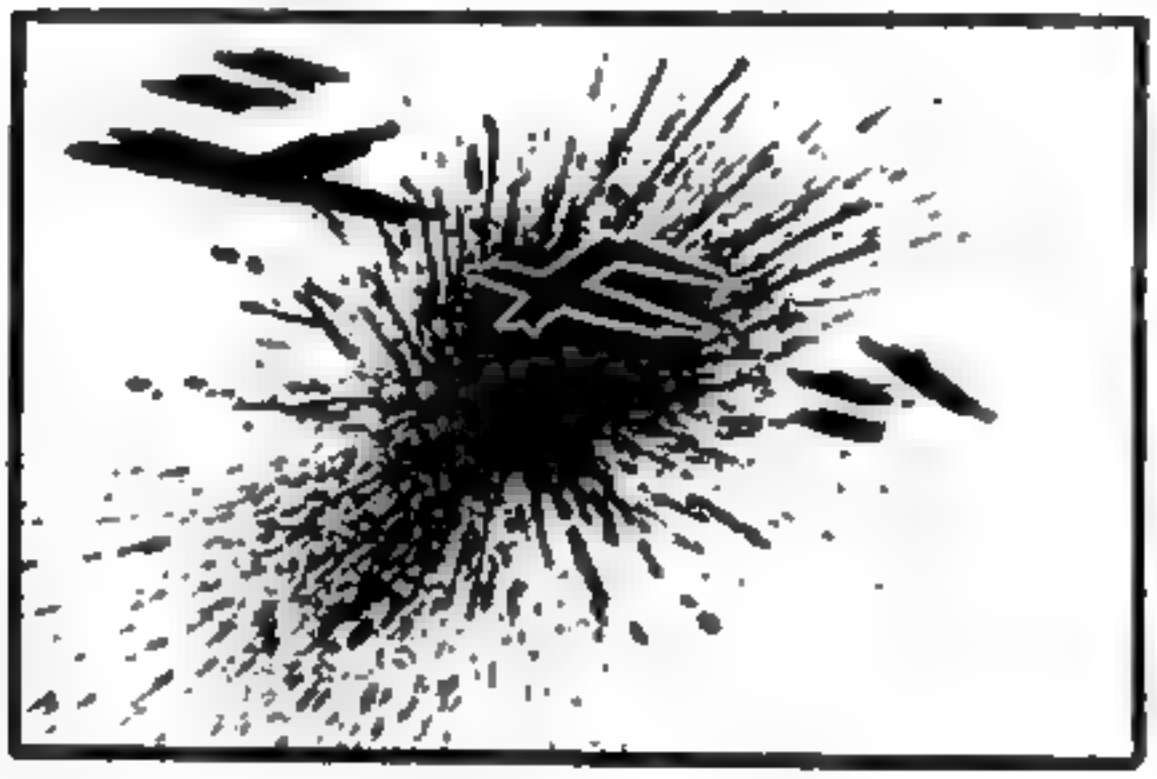

WE MAY BE BROTHERS, BUT I AM NOW ALSO YOUR KING AND YOU ARE MY SUBJECT! HOW DARE YOU FEIGN IGNORANCE TO OUR PLACES!
CAO ZHI, YOU BEAR A HEAVY CRIME FOR NOT ATTENDING OUR LATE FATHER'S FUNERAL AS WELL AS DISRESPECTING MY ENVOY!




FOR BEARING TREASONOUS INTENT AGAINST ME, YOU WILL HEREBY BE EXECUTED!




EXECUTE THE DING BROTHERS FIRST!





W-WAIT!

I HAVE NO EXCUSES...

ZHI... WHY DID YOU NOT COME FOR YOUR FATHER'S FUNERAL? HOW COULD YOU BE SO UNFILIAL WHEN HE LOVED YOU SO?

MOTHER!

YES, MOTHER.

PI, MAY I PLEASE HAVE A MOMENT WITH YOU?

DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA HOW MUCH GRIEF YOU PUT ME THROUGH WHEN I HEARD XIONG COMITTED SUICIDE!? I CARRIED YOU AND YOUR 3 BROTHERS EQUALLY IN MY WOMB FOR 9 MONTHS. WILL YOU MAKE MY PAST HARDSHIPS IN VAIN BY KILLING ALL YOUR BROTHERS?

YOU KNOW JUST AS WELL THAT YOUR YOUNGER BROTHER ZHI'S RECKLESS CAROUSING IS SIMPLY DUE TO HIS CHILDISH ARROGANCE FROM NEVER BEING PROVED WRONG BY THOSE AROUND HIM. HIS IS SIMPLY MISGUIDED. HE BEARS NO REAL GRUDGE AGAINST YOU.

MOTHER! PLEASE RISE!

I'M BEGGING YOU ON MY KNEES, PI. PLEASE SPARE ZHI.

DO YOU MEAN THAT?

I UNDERSTAND COMPLETELY. I... I WAS ONLY PLANNING TO GIVE HIM A GOOD SCARE. I HAD NO REAL INTENTION OF KILLING HIM.

THERE IS NOTHING SADDER FOR A MOTHER THAN TO SEE HER OWN SONS KILL EACH OTHER. HAD YOU DONE SO, I COULD NOT REST EVEN IN THE AFTERLIFE.

HEARING THAT IS A TREMENDOUS RELIEF.

OF COURSE, OF COURSE.

YOU'LL REALLY LET HIM LIVE?

.....

YOUR HIGHNESS.

WELL, THAT MUCH IS TO BE EXPECTED.

YOU CAN TELL?

DID QUEEN DOWAGER BIAN ASK YOU TO SPARE CAO ZHI?

THIS IS QUITE A PREDICAMENT. CAO ZHI IS UNDENIABLY A TALENTED MAN WHO IS NOT LIKELY TO HUMBLE HIMSELF TO YOU FOR ALL HIS LIFE, AND HE'S GOT MORE THAN THE DING BROTHERS WHO COULD LEAD HIM INTO MORE RECKLESS FOLLY. SPARING HIM MAY CAUSE GREAT TROUBLES IN THE FUTURE.

WELL, I COULD HARDLY TURN DOWN MY SOBBING MOTHER.

HOW DID YOUR HIGHNESS RESPOND?

HM...

BUT I'VE ALREADY PROMISED MY MOTHER.

IF HE FAILS, CHARGE HIM FOR PUTTING FALSE PRETENSES AND KILL HIM. IF HE SUCCEEDS, THEN DEMOTE HIS RANK AND EXILE HIM SOMEWHERE REMOTE SO THAT HE CANNOT ATTRACT ANY SUPPORT FROM LITERATI.

HOW ABOUT THIS, SIR? THEY SAY WHATEVER SPRINGS FROM CAO ZHI'S MOUTH CAN FORM THE MOST BEAUTIFUL POEMS. PERHAPS YOUR HIGHNESS SHOULD PUT THAT ABILITY TO THE TEST.

YES, SIR.

VERY WELL, BRING CAO ZHI BEFORE THE COURT.

AH, A WIN-WIN SCENARIO.

AN EGREGIOUS SIN, I CONFESS.

ZHI, YOU HAVE GROWN ARROGANT FROM ALWAYS OVERESTIMATING YOUR ABILITIES.

IF YOU TRULY ARE A MASTER POET AS YOU'VE CLAIMED ALL YOUR LIFE, THEN COMPOSE A POEM IN THE SPAN OF 7 PACES. IF YOU SUCCEED, I WILL FORGIVE YOUR CRIMES. IF YOU FAIL, I WILL PUNISH YOU HEAVILY FOR DECEIVING OUR FATHER IN AN ATTEMPT TO CONSPIRE FOR THE THRONE!

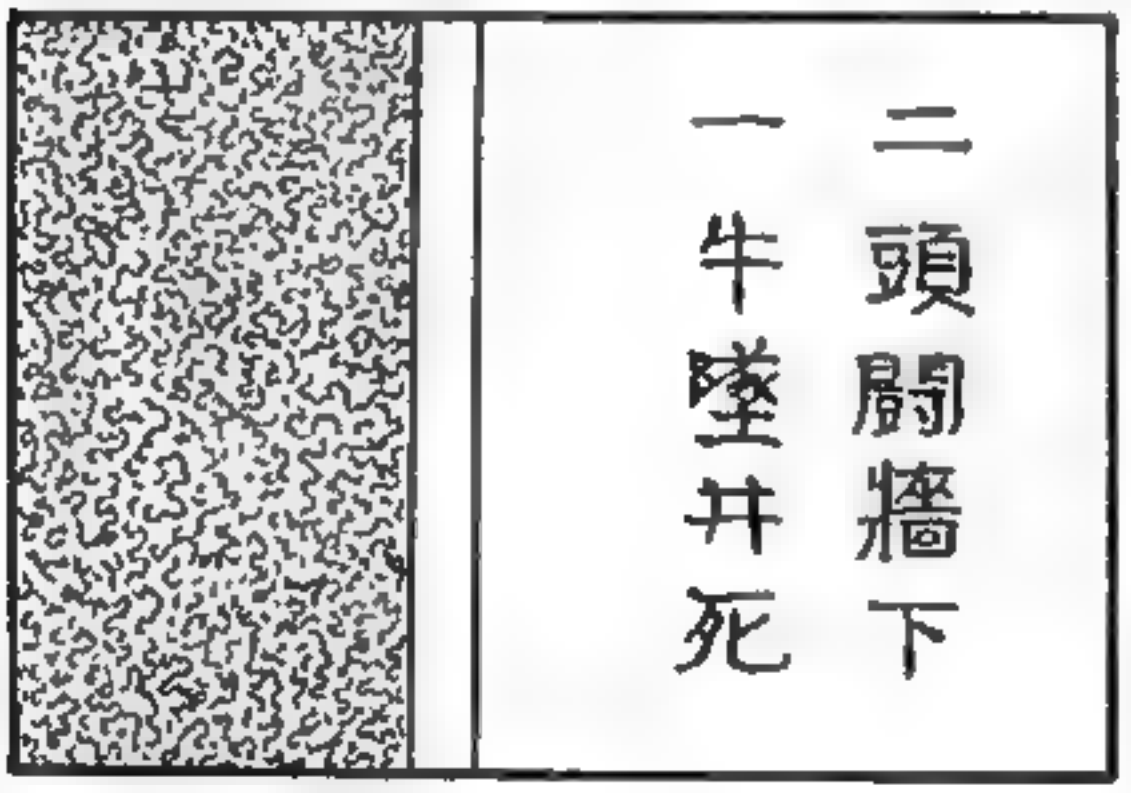
AS OUR FATHER WAS AN ACCOMPLISHED POET HIMSELF, HE ADORED YOU MOST AMONG HIS SONS FOR YOUR POETIC TALENTS. HOWEVER, I HAVE ALWAYS SUSPECTED YOU WERE USING A GHOSTWRITER TO WIN OUR FATHER'S FAVOUR.

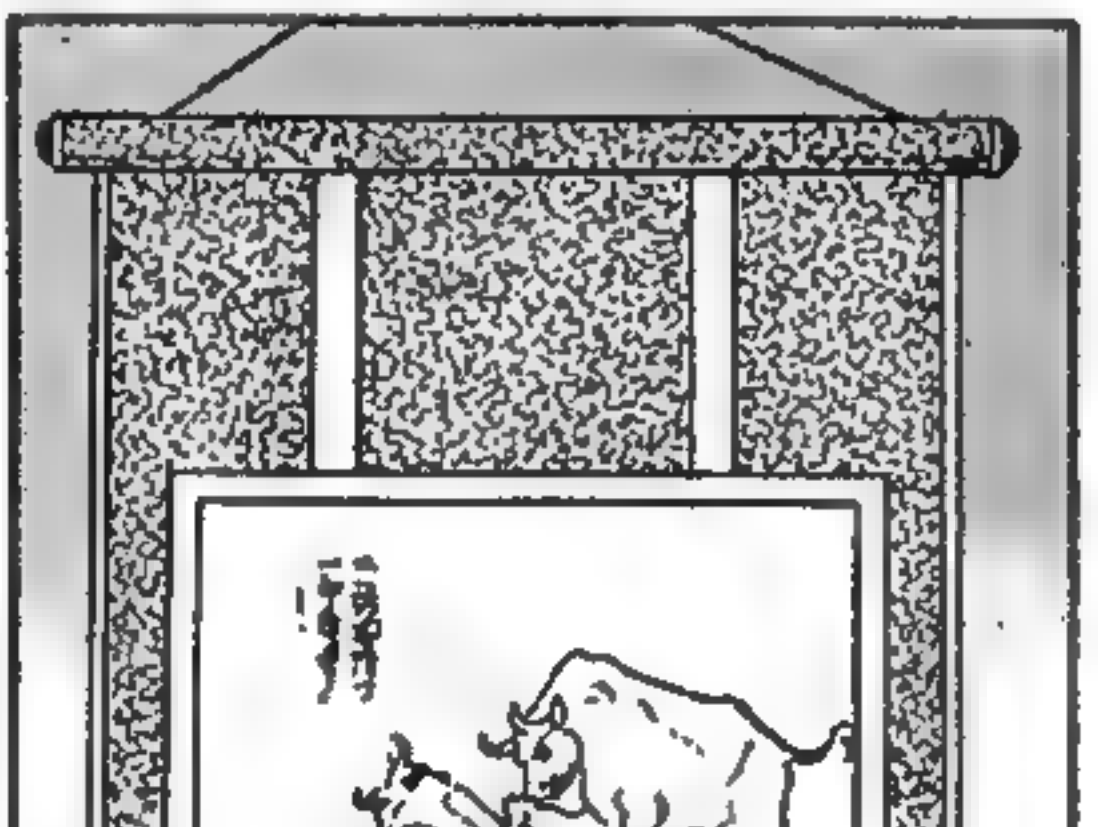




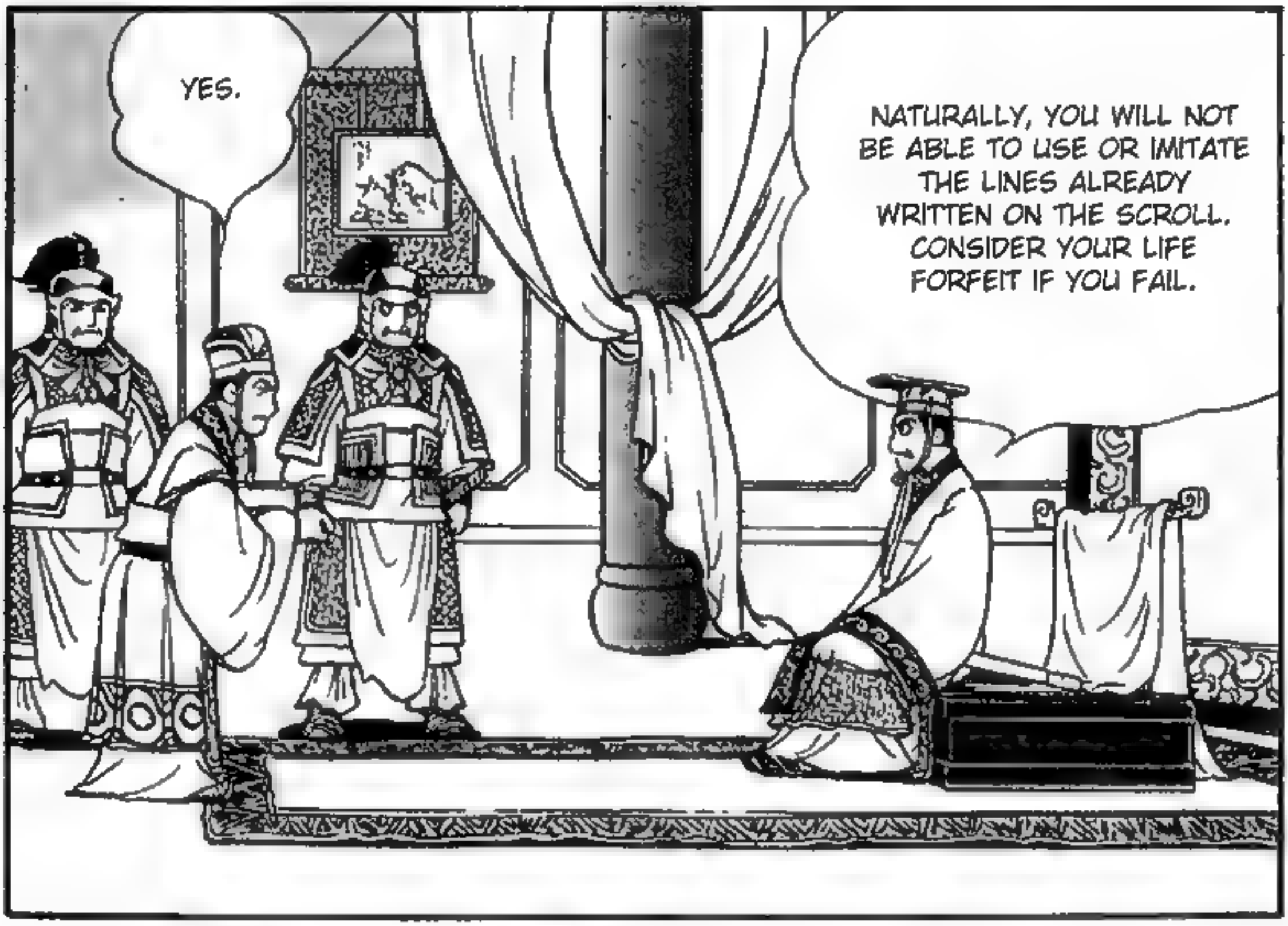


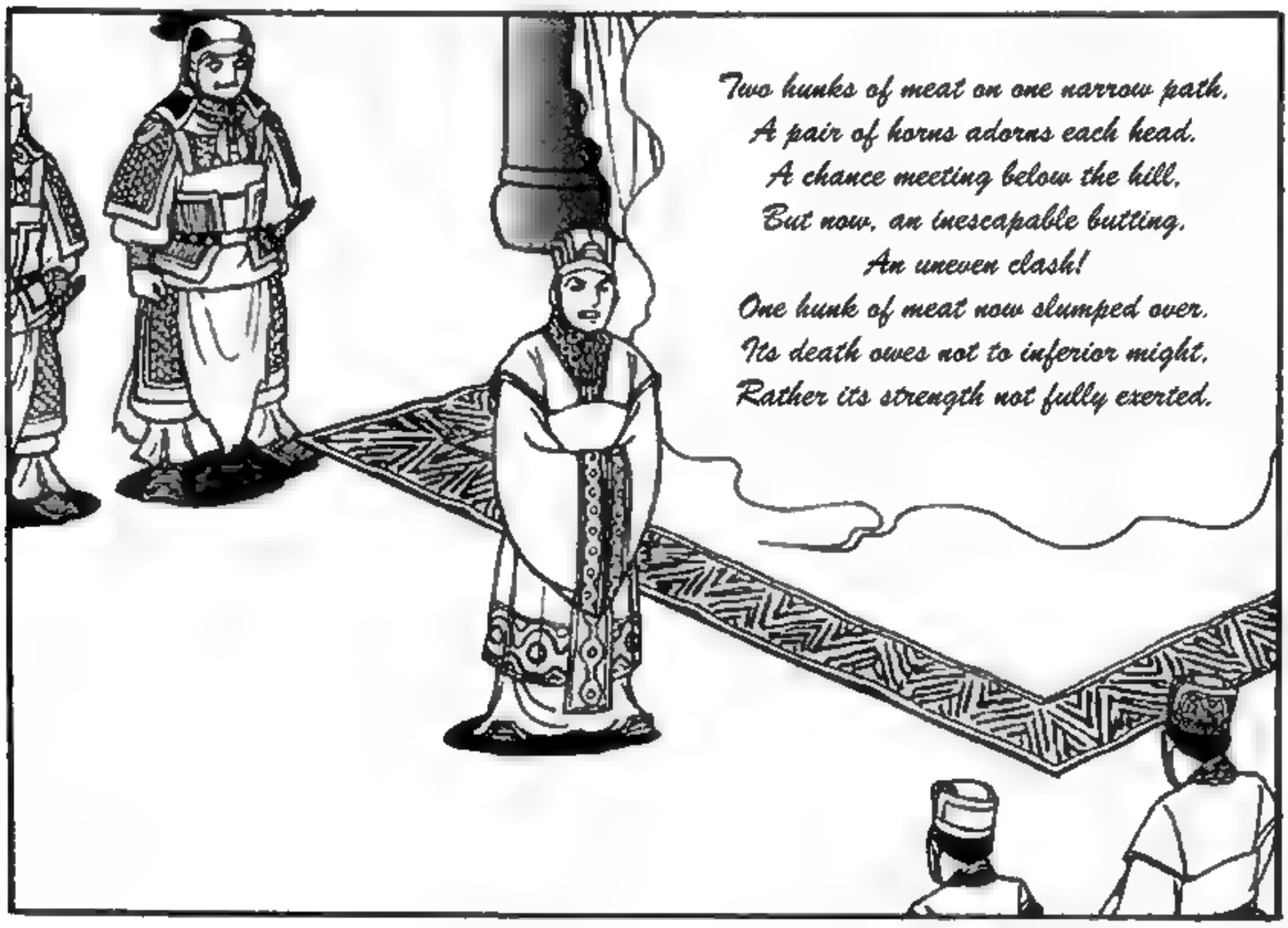
*SCROLL READS "TWO BULLS CLASH, ONE FALLS OVER DEAD INTO A WELL








YES.
NATURALLY, YOU WILL NOT BE ABLE TO USE OR IMITATE THE LINES ALREADY WRITTEN ON THE SCROLL. CONSIDER YOUR LIFE FORFEIT IF YOU FAIL.


Two hunks of meat on one narrow path,
A pair of horns adorns each head.
A chance meeting below the hill,
But now, an inescapable butting.
An uneven clash!
One hunk of meat now slumped over.
Its death owes not to inferior might,
Rather its strength not fully exerted.

I'M SPEECH-LESS...

SUPERB...

AH...

A GOOD POEM, BUT IT SEEMED TO ME YOU TOOK YOUR TIME IN WALKING THOSE 7 STEPS.

NGHH...

YES, BROTHER.

TRY IT ONE MORE TIME, AS SOON AS I NAME THE TOPIC.

BROTHERHOOD WILL BE THE TOPIC, BUT YOU ARE FORBIDDEN FROM USING THAT WORD OR ANY CLOSELY RELATED WORD.

SINCE WE ARE BROTHERS,

CAO ZHI S POEM TOUCHED THE HEARTS OF HIS AUDIENCE

Below, beanstalks lit aflame,
Above, broiling beans weeping.
From within the iron pot,
Their wails echoe outwards.
"Having sprouted from
the same root,
Why do you haste to roast us?"

WARM TEARS WELLED UP IN CAO PI S EYES.

MOTHER!

CAO PI.

I WAS MERELY UPHOLDING THE LAWS OF A STATE, MOTHER.

HOW CAN AN ELDER BROTHER GO TO SUCH LENGTHS TO ACCUSE HIS YOUNGER BROTHER?

YES, MOTHER.

ZHI, NEVER LET YOUR TALENTS LEAD YOU INTO OVERSTEPPING YOUR BOUNDS.

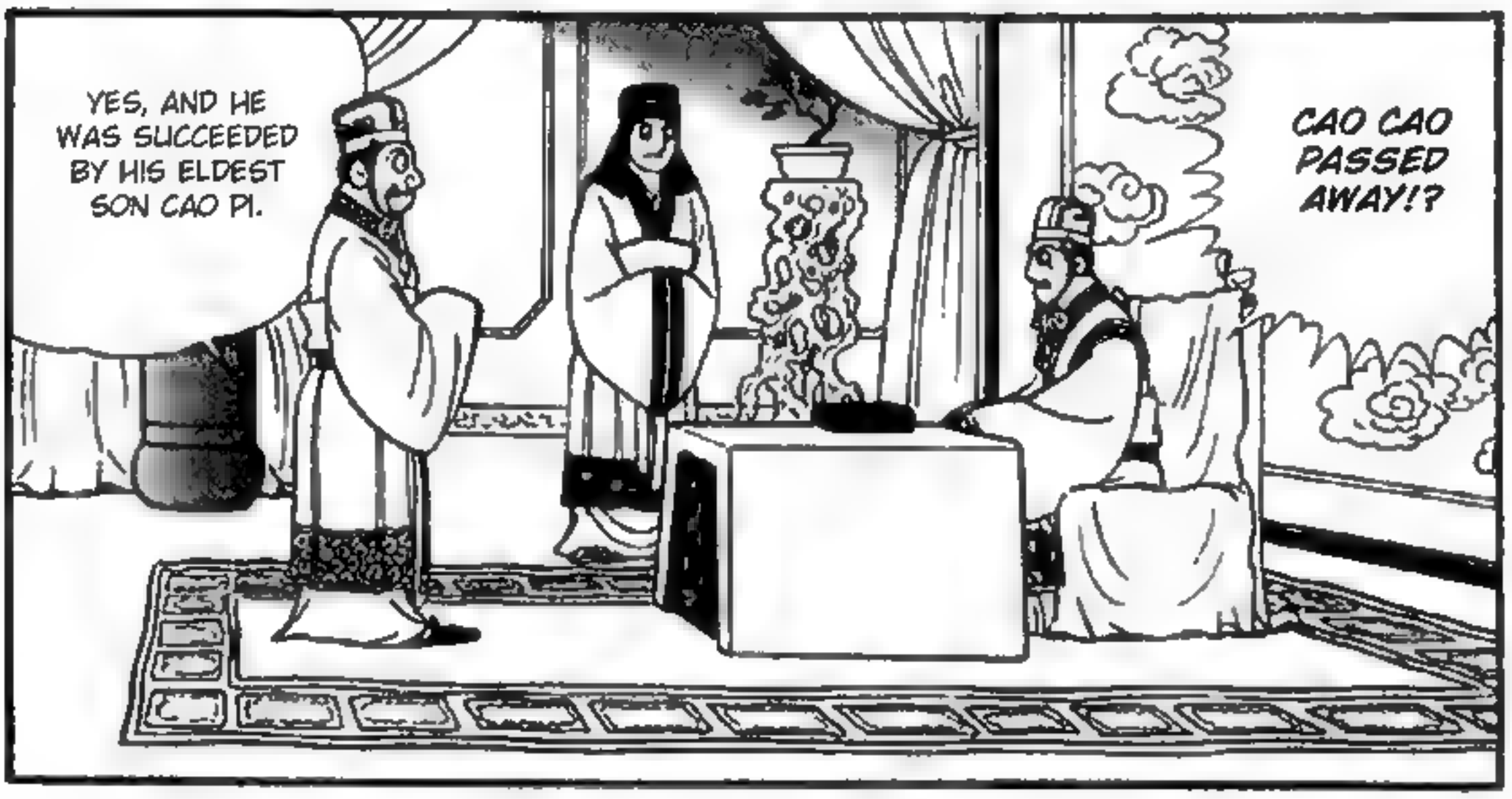
BUT WITH THIS TEST, IT IS NOW CLEAR THAT CAO ZHI NEVER DECEIVED OUR FATHER. I WILL KEEP MY WORD BY SPARING HIM.


YOU SHOULD BOTH BE MOURNING YOUR FATHER, NOT FIGHTING WITH EACH OTHER.
AS PROMISED, I WILL SPARE YOUR LIFE. HOWEVER, NEGLECTING YOUR DUTIES FOR WINE AND POEMS EVEN WHEN THE REALM HAS YET BEEN FULLY PACIFIED IS A GRAVE CRIME. AS SUCH, I AM DEMOTING YOU TO THE LORD OF ANXIANG.
YES...


SAVED BY HIS POEMS,
CAO ZHI ACCEPTED HIS
DEMOTION WITHOUT
COMPLAINT AND
TOOK HIS LEAVE.

SEEDS OF REBELLION





I'VE KNOWN CAO CAO SINCE MY TIME AS A YOUNG MAN. THOUGH HE WAS MY ENEMY, HE WAS STILL A GIANT OF OUR TIMES.

SO EVEN THE GREAT CAO CAO HAS DIED...

I MUST DO ALL I CAN DO BEFORE THEN.

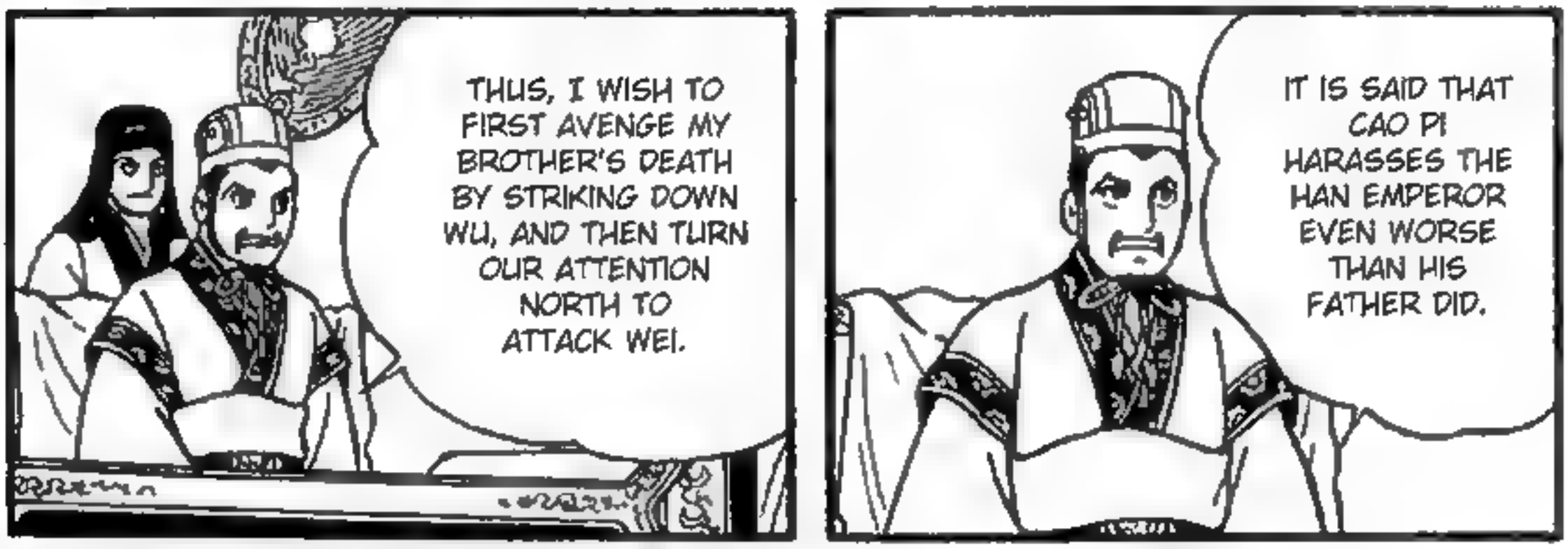
I, TOO, WILL SUCCUMB TO DEATH WHEN THE HEAVENS DECIDE MY TIME HAS COME.

BUT EVEN THAT GIANT COULD NOT BEAT HIS OWN MORTALITY ORDAINED BY HEAVEN.

YES, SIR.

SUMMON THE MEN FOR AN ASSEMBLY.


I HAVE CALLED YOU TODAY TO DISCUSS NO OTHER MATTER THAN WEI. AS YOU MAY HAVE HEARD, CAO CAO HAS PASSED AWAY, SUCCEEDED BY HIS ELDEST SON CAO PI.


THUS, I WISH TO FIRST AVENGE MY BROTHER'S DEATH BY STRIKING DOWN WU, AND THEN TURN OUR ATTENTION NORTH TO ATTACK WEI.
IT IS SAID THAT CAO PI HARASSES THE HAN EMPEROR EVEN WORSE THAN HIS FATHER DID.

OUR STRENGTH HAS RECOVERED SINCE THE LOSS OF JINGZHOU, AND WE ARE READY FOR WAR AGAIN.

A PROPER ACTION, YOUR HIGHNESS!

IT WAS LILI FENG AND MENG DA WHO ALLOWED GUAN YU TO BE SLAIN. BEFORE WE MOVE ON WU, IT IS ONLY PROPER THAT THESE TWO RECEIVE THEIR JUST PUNISHMENT.

YOUR HIGHNESS!

YES, LIAO HUA?

FINE, I WILL SEND THE ORDER FOR THEIR ARREST.

YES... TO AVENGE MY BROTHER'S DEATH WITHOUT PUNISHING THOSE TWO WOULD BE HYPOCRITICAL...

DO YOU OBJECT WITH THIS DECISION?

PLEASE WAIT, YOUR HIGHNESS.

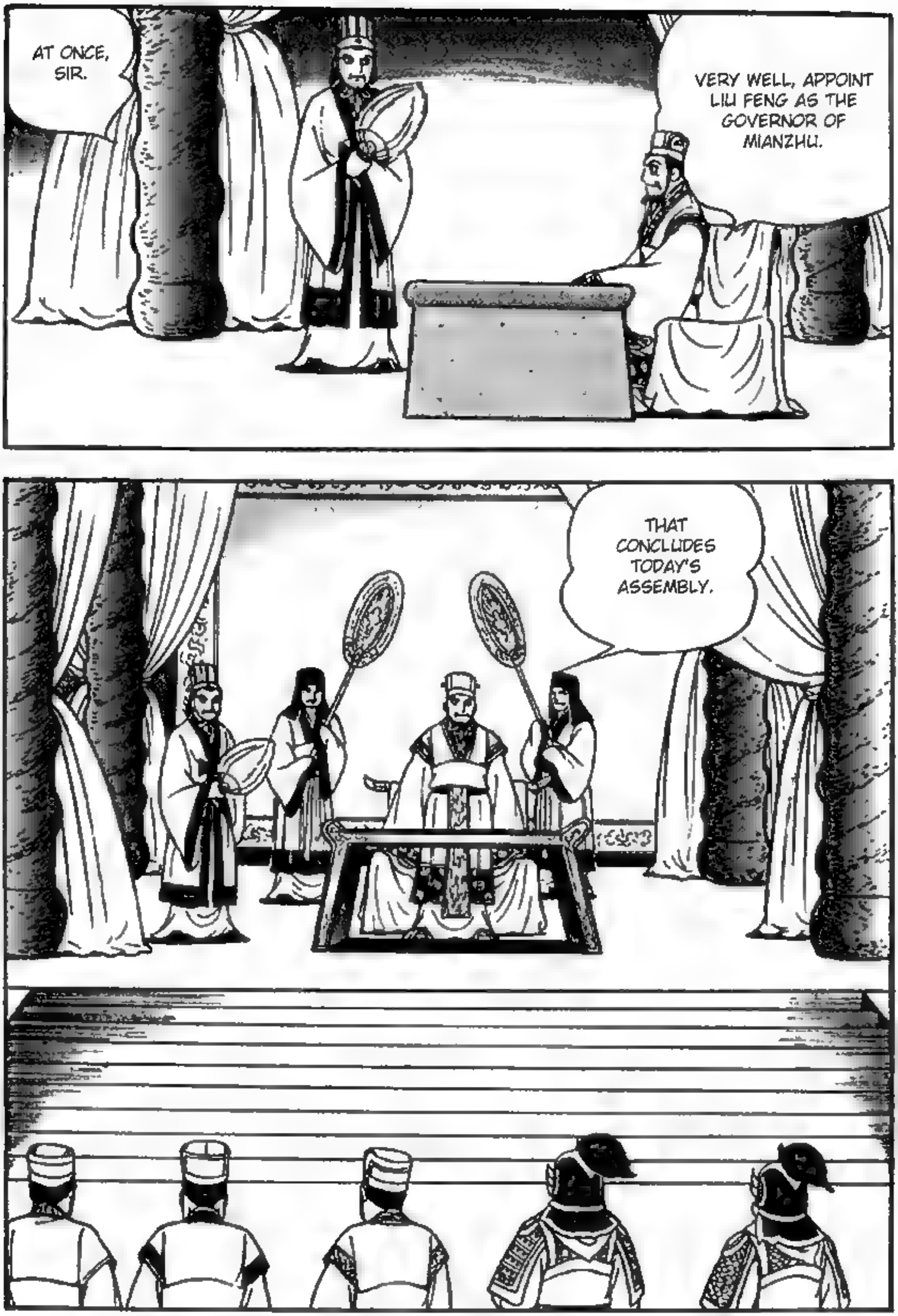
REBELLIONS OFTEN SPROUT FROM SUCH SCENARIOS.

NO, I FULLY AGREE THAT LIU FENG AND MENG DA MUST BE ACCORDINGLY PUNISHED. HOWEVER, THEY CURRENTLY COMMAND A NOT INSIGNIFICANT FORCE. IF THEY WERE TO FIND OUT THEY WILL BE PUNISHED, THEY MAY POSSIBLY REBEL.

THEN WHAT DO YOU SUGGEST?

YES, THAT SHOULD PREVENT A REBELLION.

THE TWO SHOULD BE FIRST SEPARATED. APPOINT THEM TO POSTS IN COMMANDERIES FAR APART, AND THEN ARREST EACH DISCREETLY


AT ONCE, SIR.
VERY WELL, APPOINT LIU FENG AS THE GOVERNOR OF MIANZHU.
THAT CONCLUDES TODAY'S ASSEMBLY.

YES, THANK YOU.

WELCOME HOME, MASTER.

IS ANYONE THERE!?

YES.

YES, DELIVER THIS LETTER TO MENG DA IN SHANGYONG.

DOES MY MASTER CALL FOR ME?

A MATTER OF LIFE AND DEATH!?

THE VERY LIFE OF MY DEAR FRIEND MENG DA DEPENDS ON THIS LETTER! MAKE SURE HE GETS THIS SAFELY!

Y-YES, MASTER. I WILL SAFELY DELIVER IT.

GOOD.


HM?



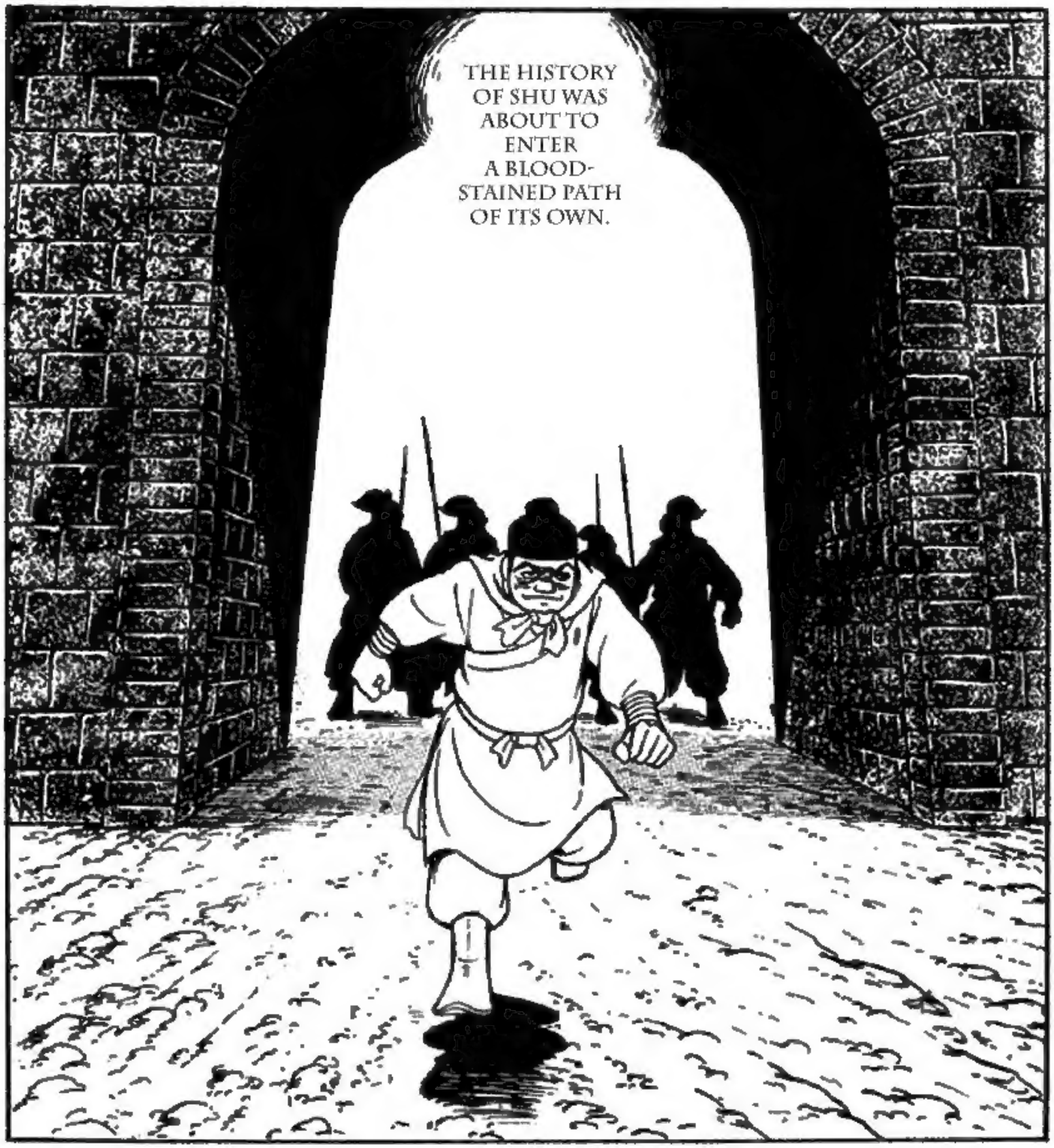

DOESN'T THE GUY OVER THERE SEEM A LITTLE STRANGE?






HMM... YEAH, HE DOES LOOK AWFULLY NERVOUS.





TRANSLATED BY HOX

eBOOKで
快適読書生活

http://www.ebookjapan.jp

電子書籍版

三国志

42

横山 光輝

© 光プロダクション／潮出版社

Original 潮出版社 希望コミックス

Digital Distributor
eBOOK Initiative Japan Co.,Ltd.
〒101-0062　東京都千代田区神田駿河台 2-9-18
http://www.ebookjapan.jp